



T H E P E T R E L :

A TALE OF THE SEA.

BY

A NAVAL OFFICER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE PETREL ;

OR,

LOVE ON THE OCEAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE unexpected elevation of Chartres to the family honours and estate, which his letters had so suddenly announced, was an event of even greater importance to him than it would have been to most men ; nor was it attended with any of those painful regrets with which a warm-hearted man often succeeds to the inheritance of a near relative. His brother, the late Sir Miles Chartres, had

been an unworthy heir to a name long highly and deservedly respected. But naturally harsh, cold, and heartless, the unrestrained indulgence of excessive selfishness, had brutalized his mind, and petrified his heart, if he ever had one. He could be soft and gentle, even to excess, when it suited his purpose to appear so, but towards those in any measure dependent upon him, or subject to his caprices, he indulged the natural harshness and querulous vindictiveness of his disposition without any other restraint than the fear of consequences to himself. He had been therefore tolerated in society, and by some few people of weak intellect, or indifference to the moral principles of their associates, even courted; which served to blind him, or to make him indifferent, to the fact that he was despised, as well as detested, by all whose opinion was worth having, precisely in the

degree in which he was really known to them.

There could have been little sympathy between such a character and our generous high-minded friend, who had unfortunately been left wholly dependent upon his profession. And thus, whilst the elder brother, amidst gross self-indulgence, was annually increasing his hoards, the younger brother was left to perish by slow but sure degrees in a climate fatal to his constitution, being unable, in pursuance of the advice of his medical friends, and his own earnest desire, to return to England and remain there. But his sordid brother, though he never designed it, was but toiling and plotting to enrich one whose near relationship he had forgotten, and whose estimable qualities he did not comprehend.

The new Baronet was shocked at the sudden death of one so nearly connected with

him by birth, and so unfit to approach the awful tribunal, but for whom he had neither felt nor feigned affection or respect. He was now free to live how he pleased and where he pleased. The urgent representations of his friends, as well as of his men of business, pressed his immediate return to England. This also had long been his most anxious wish, and indeed it had now become a positive duty; for he well knew the oppression which the old tenants and dependants of the family had suffered under the harsh unfeeling tyranny of the late proprietor, and already he longed to remedy the evils he had so long regretted, and of which he had himself indeed been the chief victim.

Sir Edwin Chartres slept little that night. Well he knew that persons like his late brother were naturally prone to place their confidence in worthless unprincipled knaves,

ready to flatter them, and to do their bidding without hesitation, whatever it might be. Indeed the urgency with which his immediate return had been pressed, both by old friends and old tenants of the family, had something ominous about it.

He had never liked the Cape. Few people fancy a residence to which necessity, and not choice, has led them, especially invalids who fail to regain their health, where they have been taught to hope for it. Yet now that rank and wealth awaited him in England, whilst all obstacles to his return had not only ceased, but new and urgent motives called importunately for his return, he felt no disposition to go. Rushton, with the freedom of an old friend,—and in no class of human beings, is friendship more cordial, or more truthful, than amongst our Anglo-Indian brethren,—congratulated him, and urged him to go as soon as possible.

“Rushton” said the Baronet, “I was much wishing to see you. I hear there is no chance of a passage for India, and I rejoice at it. I am now, you know, a rich man. I wish you would take the trouble to secure at once the house in which we lived so pleasantly together last year. You were always the best hand at that sort of thing. I must have a house, and as your stay will be uncertain, you must live with me, as I did with you at Samgur. It will save you trouble and be a great comfort to me.”

There was no feeling of obligation on either side, in these matters. It was in the true Indian fashion; and Rushton, or rather the head servants of the two, got up a very comfortable establishment at once, at which their brave friend Captain Timmins was forthwith invited to accept a general invitation as long as he should remain at the Cape. Chartres never dined from home.

“That won’t be long,” said Rushton, “for he is likely to return in a week or ten days in command of a ship in the bay, whose Captain is dying. I wonder you don’t take a passage with him. May would be a beautiful month to arrive in, with a whole summer before you.”

Chartres did not attempt to explain his new-born wish to remain at the Cape,—indeed he had not ventured to analyze his own motives very accurately. His mind, tormented by conflicting inducements between going and staying, had taken refuge in the decision which for the moment demanded the smallest amount of personal exertion.

The General, meantime, did not feel quite at his ease, though, that Chartres, instead of embarking for England with Captain Timmins, should have taken a house in Cape Town. It puzzled him much less than it had done most other people. Mrs. Vaughan’s

pointed allusions to Herbert had induced Darcie to read the narrative once more; and he was surprised to find that whilst the praises bestowed so deservedly upon Chartres had engrossed so large a portion of his attention, the subsequent mention of Herbert in terms equally strong, and certainly more intimately mixed up with the personal adventures both of Norah and Darby, had almost escaped his notice. It now became somewhat disagreeably obvious to him that this young officer had gained, and he admitted honourably gained, a high place in the mother's estimation. He recollected that Darby had already been warmly attached to him; and it arose also to his recollection, that although he himself had not particularly fancied this young man, he had been a general favourite. It was a disagreeable subject, yet he could not shake it off.

“And that simple girl!” he muttered to himself, “with a mother almost as simple as herself, upon some points; and that enthusiastic boy, Mr. Darby, have been continually with Herbert ever since this detestable adventure; and he, I’ll answer for him, playing the romantic lover.”

All this was the more perplexing, that he really had nothing to allege against Herbert, save only that he was not a Baronet with seven thousand a-year.

“And then,” he resumed, “Anna, though an excellent woman, has a foolish prejudice about age, as if it was not quite clear that a man ought to be twenty years older than his wife; and the girl has a horrid trick of imbibing her mother’s prejudices; and there’s no reasoning with women, when once they take the bit between their teeth. And as to Chartres, confound the fellow! To make matters worse,

he takes a pleasure in looking older than he is. Serjeant Tap would set him up and make him ten years younger in a week ; but he takes no pride in himself."

The length of Darcie's reverie had by no means improved the relish of it. He saw clearly that Mrs. Vaughan would be against him, and Mrs. Vaughan was a very fearful opponent, simply because she was the gentlest creature living, and endued with high religious and moral feeling, added to a remarkably sound judgment, and a strong self-evident unwillingness to disagree with any one. She had unconsciously become the oracle of the circle in which she moved, in all matters in which it might become her to express an opinion; and that perhaps not the less so that she had a remarkably soft sweet voice, slightly, very slightly, tinged with an idea of a Scotch accent. All this was vexing and perplexing.

But the current of the General's cogitations was doomed to be suddenly disturbed.

"A man-of-war in the offing, General," said Captain O'Gorman, galloping up to the open window. He belonged to Darcie's late regiment, and having been left at the Cape, as Aide-de-camp to the General, whose removal had made room for his old Colonel, he had remained as Aide-de-camp.

The preparations for the reception of the family had nearly been completed; and no one doubted but that the new-comer was the Petrel, and this was a godsend to the idlers of Cape Town, who, having talked El Fra Diavolo and her adventures quite threadbare, were delighted to have a new subject. But a message from the Admiral soon after, announced to Darcie that the stranger was a frigate; and O'Gorman, who rode down to the Admiralty House, returned with the

informaion that it was the Brilliant from India.

“Ah, hah!” exclaimed the General, “my old friends the Barhams. Sir Edward will soon be on shore. I wish Anna had been here to receive them; but I must do as well as I can. Ride down, O’Gorman, to the wharf, and tell Barham, when he lands, that we are quite ready to receive them here. Order the carriage to be got ready, and don’t forget to tell him that we are expecting Mrs. Darcie and the girls daily.”

“Well,” said Mr. Vaughan, who now entered with his wife, “we set off immediately upon the report having reached us that the Petrel had arrived; but it is an error, I find.”

“True,” said the General, rising and leading Mrs. Vaughan to a seat; “it was well and kindly done. Sir Edward and Lady Barham are old friends of Anna’s. I have sent to invite them

here, and my kind friend Mrs. Vaughan will, I know, do me the favour to take such measures for the reception of Lady Barham as will save the credit of the house in Anna's absence. We are poor creatures, Vaughan, without the ladies; and I am heartily tired of my batchelorhood."

"Adonis," said Mr. Vaughan, from the window, addressing his coachman, a remarkably ugly black man, who was holding four light high-spirited nags in hand, with great ease and composure, "get the carriage and horses under the shade of the trees."

Mrs. Vaughan, with her usual good humour, had proceeded to inspect the apartment of the expected guests, fondly anticipating that the next arrival would be the Petrel with her friends.

"Look there, Vaughan," said Darcie, "see my mad Aide-de-camp galloping over

those loose stones, as if he was bent upon breaking his horse's knees, or his own neck, or both."

"Hurrah!" said the good-humoured O'Gorman, panting for breath, as he threw his well spurred steed upon his haunches. "They are come! They are come! They are well!"

"Mad boy!" said the General gravely, "what can you mean?"

"I mean, sir," said O'Gorman, more composedly, "that Mrs. Darcie and her daughters have arrived in the Brilliant. Sir Edward will be detained some time with the Admiral, who places his barge at your disposal;—there she is at the wharf, all ready for you. They have, of course, no certainty of finding you here."

The Brilliant had anchored, and the ladies were preparing themselves to land as soon as Sir Edward should return, when it was

announced to the commanding officer that the barge was approaching, with a military officer in her. The First Lieutenant examined her with his telescope.

"Guard turn out," he exclaimed, "it's a General Officer ; but I can't see his face."

As the boat rowed up under the Brilliant's stern, the Captain's native servant, looking out from the stern window, addressed little Emma, who was standing near him,

"I see him! he Colonel Darcie he self, Miss Emma."

The child, looking up, recognised her father.

"Mamma! mamma! Norah!" she exclaimed, "here's dear Papa."

Then, rushing out of the cabin, without her bonnet, her long ringlets streaming over her back and shoulders, in utter defiance of all etiquette, she sprang up the ladder upon the quarter-deck, and as the General raised his

hat, in acknowledgment of the presented arms and the ruffled drum, bowing also to the assembled officers, Emma, who saw nothing, thought of nothing, but that her father stood before her, threw herself into his arms, sobbing, but unable to speak.

CHAPTER II.

It was a joyful but an agitating reunion, especially to Mrs. Darcie, whose health had latterly given way. It had, however, the immediate effect of reanimating her, for the moment; and leaving their kind friend Lady Barham to follow at her leisure, they landed at once, and were soon rattled up to their old residence, the Mount, at the foot of the Table Mountain, where Mrs. Vaughan impatiently awaited them.

“What have you not endured since we

parted!" said that excellent woman; "but, thank God, we have you here once more, and are likely to keep you; it is really difficult to believe that all this has passed in little more than two months."

But we will not attempt to give the private conference of the two good matrons when left to themselves, for Norah had soon been summoned to receive two or three young friends, who had the good sense to decline being announced to Mrs. Darcie at present.

The arrival of the Darcies, they told Norah, had created quite a sensation at Cape Town—nothing else was thought of.

The Mount was a rambling irregular building, pleasantly detached from the town, and sufficiently commodious, with some large trees near it, and beautiful vines, but the open space about it had little resemblance to what we call grounds and gardens. Everything

was rough, like the soil on which it stood. Emma had already been scampering all over it, delighted to find herself once more at home, though far from forgetting Papa Daunton and her other friends. And Norah, having dismissed her visitors, did in some measure enter into Emma's view of the matter, though by no means to the extent she would have done three months before ;—that short period had indeed altered her wonderfully. Emma saw it and marvelled, but made no remark, and luckily soon forgot it.

Sir Edwin Chartres having been announced, the interesting conference between our excellent matrons was broken up, and the General was highly gratified at the reception given by Mamma to his friend and protégé ; but Norah, having heard of his arrival, flew to greet him with a glowing check, and with a warmth of cordiality, which, whilst it brought a flush into

the pale cheek of the invalid, and restored animation to his eye, lighted up her own brilliant countenance, and imparted a buoyancy to her step, which not only delighted the General, but startled Major Singleton, who had just arrived, and threatened his peace of mind with new perils. Happily every one was too much occupied with his own feelings to be a very critical observer of others.

But Mrs. Vaughan, calm and self-possessed, drew more than one conclusion from the scene ;—Chartres was the great object of interest at the moment to all the Darcies, —obviously, avowedly so ; yet in what different lights did they look upon him !

Norah's heart was overflowing with tender recollections, amongst which gratitude to, and the highest esteem for Chartres, stood prominent ; but his presence naturally reminded her of the absent Herbert.

How often does it happen that when a few friends are conversing together cheerfully and familiarly, and to all appearance influenced by similar views and feelings, that their real views, thoughts, hopes, and fears, would, were they clearly revealed, be found full of contradictions ! At least it was so here, though all were, under ordinary circumstances, pre-eminently frank and open.

The General was in high good humour ; the meeting of Norah and Chartres had been so agreeable to both, that the invalid had shaken off his listless apathy,—had become animated and cheerful ; whilst Norah's face beamed with unquestionable delight, which her tongue as frankly avowed. Yet the thoughts of her guileless heart were elsewhere.

Singleton saw all that was passing with astonishment, and with something like self-reproach. Here was a pale valetudinarian, a

man of whom (for the gallant Major was very young of his age) he had been accustomed to speak, as "Old Chartres, poor dear old Chartres," become an object of interest to Norah Darcie; and her father, far from considering it preposterous, was evidently much gratified at it!

"And I," said the gallant and juvenile-looking Major to himself, "I was fool enough to be ashamed of admiring this fascinating creature."

His eyes were fixed on her, and he thought he had never seen her or any one else look so exquisitely lovely,—for all the grateful feelings of her pure and affectionate heart glowed in her countenance.

"I," he resumed, "shrank from an avowal of my admiration, from false pride, from a mean and stupid apprehension of ridicule; and now, this pale, old-looking Chartres, with

his title and fortune, lays them at her feet before my face ; Darcie is delighted to see it, and his fair daughter shows no repugnance."

The Major sat in gloomy silence whilst these thoughts and regrets passed through his mind, till he suddenly recollected that he was charged with an embassy.

"His Excellency, Mrs. Darcie, was very desirous to have offered his congratulations to you and Miss Darcie on your arrival, which has given him great pleasure, but he feared you might be fatigued."

The delicate scrupulous Chartres rose.

"The Governor sets us an excellent example," he said; and taking Mrs. Darcie's offered hand, "Excuse my selfishness," he added, "pardon me for not having been more considerate. You are expecting guests, too,—the Barhams, I believe."

Norah shook hands cordially with him and begged he would not go; but he persisted in departing, though by looking back at the fair girl whose enlivening presence he was so unwillingly quitting, he ran his head against the door-post.

“I hope you are not hurt,” said Norah, advancing towards him, quite unconscious that she had been the innocent cause of the accident; “but it is the practice here to keep the rooms so darkened,” she added, “that such things must happen.’”

It was not possible for other visitors to remain, after Chartres’ remark and retreat.

“Come and look at a pair of horses with me, Singleton,” said the General; “Anna was never very courageous, and now her nerves are sadly shaken. She has no faith in O’Gorman’s choice, unless it be for his own saddle; and she is right.”

Norah had found an interesting occupation in arranging her own room, and restoring her own particular treasures to their respective localities; the only important addition she had made to her little collection was a certain harp shell, which she found great difficulty in fixing appropriately. Perhaps she felt pleasure in moving it from place to place.

Mrs. Vaughan once more alone with her friend, gave free utterance to her thoughts.

“There is something about Sir Edwin Chartres, Anna, which I do not understand, and which I strongly suspect he does not himself clearly comprehend; for his habitual lassitude operates mentally, and almost neutralizes half his good qualities. He has not energy enough to tear himself away from our dear girl, though his natural humility and delicacy forbid him all hope of obtaining her. And the frank tone of affectionate gratitude which, in

the innocence of her heart, Norah adopts towards him, acts as a spell, whilst his own discernment, otherwise sufficiently alert, warns him instinctively that this very tone is fatal to his hopes."

"I doubt," said the mother, "whether Sir Edwin has, or ever had, any serious thoughts of Norah, though I am aware that he admires her; but I fear that Darcie has very decided views on the subject, and hence I tremble for my poor girl,—not that he is harsh; but, under all the circumstances, I foresee trouble."

Susan entered to inform her mistress that Lady Barham's servants were arrived, and that her ladyship, who was paying a visit to the Admiral's family on the way, would soon be there.

"I hope you have not had any disagreeable news by this mail, Singleton?" observed Darcie, looking up rather apprehensively in his friend's

face; "for you seem to me to be out of spirits, though I am sure you share my satisfaction at getting my womenkind all safely around me once more. They owe much to your kindness, during my absence, they tell me."

The Major assured him that nothing had occurred in England to annoy him, and tried to be cheerful; but with little success.

"It's a confounded bore," resumed Darcie, "to be laid under all sorts of obligations to all sorts of people. I don't so much mind Chartistes," he added, whilst he examined the hoof of one of the horses; "but the whole host of those Petrels. Old Daunton is a good sort of fellow, though not in our way; but that young fellow, Herbert,—you recollect him, Singleton?" and as he spoke he dropped the foot of the horse and looked up at his friend.

"Yes—no—yes—oh, yes, to be sure," answered the Major, colouring from the con-

sciousness that he was exciting his friend's surprise; but the name of Herbert had been at the moment equally unexpected and disagreeable to him.

"Ah!" continued the General, "I see how it is; I'd have betted a thousand pounds upon it."

"Upon what?" asked the Major, in increased confusion.

But the other hoof was now under close inspection, and his manner passed unheeded.

"Why," resumed the General, "I some how or other took a dislike to that young shippy the very first time I saw him, and I have no doubt but you did the same. He may be a very good fellow in his way, and has certainly proved himself to be a very gallant fellow; but he is not one of us, Singleton."

"I confess," replied his friend, "that my view of this young man coincides altogether with yours, and did so from the first. I should

not myself like to lie under a serious obligation to him; and yet Mrs. Vaughan, who has known him from a child, always speaks of him in high terms, and he is certainly a man of good family."

"Women are no judges in these matters, Singleton,—a brave and good-looking young fellow, who in his ignorance of the world is said to adore the sex, may always win their favour; and I suspect that Anna, between her friend's affection for him and her own obligations to him, greatly overrates him."

"Well, General," said O'Gorman, joining them, for he was master of the horse to the establishment, "how do you like those nags? I can't call them a perfect match; but Dawson's only reason for parting with them is, that they are not showy enough, and will always stand still if you'll let them;—faults unpardonable in my eyes; but I, you know, am only acting under orders."

“They are not exactly what I should buy, though sound and serviceable horses; but between you and Mrs. Darcie I never expect to have carriage horses that will please me; so I must be content to cater for my own riding. I think your condemnation will go far towards winning her favour for these animals; but she shall hear the whole truth, and decide for herself.”

“Here’s a carriage driving up,” said the Major; “no doubt it will be the Barhams: so I shall wish you good morning.”

The Major rode off, as if glad of an excuse to go. O’Gorman looked after him and laughed heartily.

“What are you grinning about, Charles?” asked the General. “I certainly fancied there was something odd about Singleton to-day, and I suspect that you know more than I do about it; but I must go to welcome my guests.

Anna shall try these horses in the carriage, and if she likes them, close the bargain."

O'Gorman, whose mother was the General's half-sister, shrugged his shoulders as his chief returned to the house.

"Well," he said, "it's a monstrous funny world this, and a mighty pleasant world too, to us idle young fellows, whose only occupation it is to flirt with the women and laugh at the men. Here's this little innocent-looking cousin of mine doing more mischief than a regiment of monkeys, and I really believe not only without intending it, but absolutely without suspecting it? There's poor old Chartres worships her, and unless I am much more at fault than I usually am in such matters, that starch magnifico,—that superb muster of a high caste household staff-officer, my very good friend the Major, the vainest and most prudent of military exquisites, is not only

desperately in love with her, but half mad with jealousy of that tanned skeleton, Chartres, and wholly mad with himself for being such a fool! Well, that shows he has some grace in him. He's not quite lost yet, and my life for it, little Norah will laugh at them both, for I am certain she does not care a straw for either of them. Nay, if I am not mistaken, his Excellency has a sort of a kind of a hankering that way too. I should like to see the Major's horror at finding a rival in his chief. Lots of fun coming, depend upon it."

"I am glad to hear that, cousin," said Emma, who had overheard his last words. I have not had any fun since I left the Petrel."

"Come, Emma, now tell me honestly if you wish to have any share in the fun I spoke of, who did you like best in the Petrel, as you had such fun there?"

“ Why, I liked them all: there’s the Captain, and Mr. Herbert and the Doctor, and Tandy, and the monkey;—I liked them all.”

“ And who did mamma like best ?”

“ Why the Captain and that dear Mr. Herbert, to be sure.”

“ Hem ! and who else liked that dear Herbert, my little coz ?”

“ I won’t tell you any more. You’re only laughing at me, as usual ; come and see my Jacko, he’s very like you.” And off she skipped, laughing aloud.

Mrs. Darcie exerted herself to appear cheerful, and to make her house agreeable to her guests, but continued effort was beyond her strength. Lady Barham perceived this, and entreated that they might decline all invitations and parties, as she herself required rest and quiet, after her long sea-voyage ; for she agreed with Mrs. Vaughan, that her kind hos-

tess looked ill and harassed, as well she might. Norah, who now never willingly quitted her, took alarm ; she knew what it was that preyed so much upon her mother's mind, and felt deeply grateful ; though inclined to reproach herself for having brought this affliction upon one so dear to her, and who had already undergone so much more than her delicate constitution was equal to. Norah soon became almost as pale as her mother,—her natural cheerfulness was gone, and she sat in Mrs. Darcie's room for hours together without speaking.

Mrs. Vaughan was, to a certain extent, aware of the cause of her friend's sufferings, and guessed more than she knew ; but was not aware how far she had committed herself, upon a point so directly opposed to the General's views ; for although Mrs. Darcie had full and entire confidence in her friend, she could not at this moment, resolve to explain even to her,

all the strange circumstances, which had left her but a choice of evils; the least of which was fraught with grief and pain.

To have taken so decided a step, as to have sanctioned Norah's engagement to Herbert, not merely without the possibility of consulting her husband, but absolutely in contradiction to his well-known sentiments upon so important a subject, was a source of bitter grief to her; and in her present state of health, the thought of it acted most injuriously. Her medical attendants had hoped that the low fever which was consuming her, and which was evidently connected with mental suffering, would have given way, after a little rest and peace in the bosom of her own family; but they were disappointed. Their patient grew worse; and Norah, whose whole soul was devoted to her, began to show symptoms of the same malady. The General became alarmed.

Fortunately, the Brilliant was ordered to proceed sooner than had been intended, and this was a great relief to both guests and host; for the invalid would not hear of their removing to the Admiral's house, which they had been urged to do.

Norah, when these kind friends had left them, was enabled to devote herself entirely to her mother. Yet there was a reserve, even in their most confidential intercourse; for there was one subject, which, although it was ever present to their thoughts, they both scrupulously avoided any allusion to. The only person they now admitted was Mrs. Vaughan. Norah's pale face and languid manner, distressed her almost as much as it did Mrs. Darcie; and by degrees this excellent friend was admitted to their entire confidence, to the great comfort of all.

Darcie, meanwhile, though really anxious

about his wife, to whom he was sincerely attached, was vexed as well as grieved that Norah should look so ill, and be so much out of spirits. Chartres, with whom he had cultivated a great degree of intimacy, had been continually at the house; but although Norah had always treated him with great cordiality, she had gradually almost ceased to make her appearance, and was so silent, so absent, so unlike her former self when she did appear, that Chartres became very uneasy, and the General not very well pleased.

But whilst Norah thought so little about the frequent and interminable visits of Sir Edwin at the Mount, even now, when scarcely any one else was admitted, other people, who ought to have been much less interested in the matter, had devoted much more attention to the circumstance, which began to afford a subject of conversation for professed gossips. Captain

Timmins had indeed unconsciously checked this, by continually expressing his conviction that his friend Sir Edwin would return to England with him in the *Sercy*, a large ship, of which he had taken the command, in consequence of the death of her Captain. He had often expressed his wish to that effect to the Baronet, whose frequent visitor he was; but Sir Edwin was not celebrated for giving very decisive answers, where there was no absolute necessity for it. The Captain had gone so far as to speak of it as a settled thing within Chartres' hearing; but our worthy friend's mind was not always where his person might chance to be, and he had never given the subject a serious thought. It was now time to come to the point, and Timmins having no doubt that the vacant half of his cuddy would be taken by Sir Edwin, called upon him, purposing to close the affair.

“My dear sir,” he said, “I have called to speak to you about your passage home with me,—the Sercy will be ready to start in a week; but as that would be short notice for you, I have prevailed upon the ship’s agent to give me three days’ grace, and I hope that will be sufficient for you. We shall arrive in England in time to have cheated the winter.”

Sir Edwin was always glad to see Captain Timmins, and entertained a high regard for him, but he disliked sudden propositions as much as he did sudden movements. He was exceedingly surprised; and hesitated to reply. He felt that it was natural enough that the Captain, who had so well known his anxiety to get home, should make sure that he would avail himself of such an opportunity, and that it would be difficult for him to give any satisfactory reason for remaining at the Cape, even to himself, much less to Captain Timmins.

“Mr. Turnbull, sir, and the Doctor go with me,” pursued Captain Timmins, hoping to encourage a favourable decision.

“A week or ten days, my dear Captain Timmins,” replied the Baronet at length ; “it would be wholly impossible for me to get ready in a week or ten days, if I were well enough to exert myself, which I am not. I would sooner take a passage with you than with any other man living; but I am not well enough even to consider the subject seriously, and I am wholly unprepared.”

This was decisive; the Captain was obliged to give up the point, which mortified him severely, not merely from pecuniary disappointment, though that was considerable, but much more from the fear of ridicule; for, proud of the friendship of the rich Baronet, who mixed little in society, and who not only did really entertain a great esteem for him, but took

pleasure in giving proofs of it, the Captain, who had felt no doubt in his own mind that his distinguished friend would embark with him for England in his ship, had, as we have said, spoken of it, as if it had been a settled affair; and as there were many reasons why it should be so, and no ostensible difficulty or cause of prevention, and Captain Timmins' intimacy with Sir Edwin was matter of notoriety,—that which he had persuaded himself to believe under the influence of a strong desire that it should be so, had naturally been generally credited amongst those who neglect their own affairs, to devote their attention to those of their neighbours; a class both numerous and important in most small societies. This general belief that he would embark forthwith for England, had at last served to check impertinent observations concerning Chartres' long and frequent visits to the Mount, which

were the more likely to be commented upon, because he visited nowhere else.

Captain Timmins hastened forthwith to the ship's agent, to give up the delay of three or four days which he had so earnestly pressed for, and to report that he would sail at the time originally fixed. He then wended his way to the house in which he boarded, very much out of humour, and was joined near the house by his landlord. His landlady was just then in full gossip with a congenial neighbour.

"So Mrs. Darcie is very ill, and the beauty herself looks pale and disappointed," said Mrs. Clackwell, to her very dear friend, Mrs. Secondchop."

"Well, my dear, isn't it very natural? Here's that proud General has been running after the rich Nabob, Sir Edwin Chartres, and his ten thousand a-year; and as they say he had

been very attentive before he was rich, it must be a great disappointment, both to mother and daughter, that with all the encouragement which the whole world knows he has had from them all, he holds back. Only let him come forward like a man, and make his offer; and you'll see they'll all be as well and as gay as ever."

"'Tis a great shame, I must say, for him to draw back," resumed Mrs. Clackwell, "as soon as he becomes a rich Baronet; but Captain Timmins told my George that he was certain the Baronet would go home with him in the Sercy; and as the Captain is so intimate with Sir Edwin, he would not say that, if it wasn't all settled; so we must not wonder if those proud Darcies are disappointed and out o' sorts, after all; for rich Baronets are not to be picked up every day in the colonies,—not even old and ugly ones. You and I,

my dear, wouldn't like such a disappointment."

"That's very true, my dear; but I wonder why the General stands it; he ought to bring the Baronet to book, I say."

"Hush, my dear; here's my George coming, and the Captain with him. He's the best boarder we ever had; for he hardly ever dines at home, and is always making me presents of some sort. He's a jewel of a man, though somewhat touchy. My dear Captain Timmins," continued the lady in the same breath, as that gentleman entered the room, "I am terrified to see you walking about in the hot sun at noon-day, but you sailors are afraid of nothing. You can't think how sorry we shall be to lose you; and must you really go so soon?"

The Captain, who appeared to have less relish than was his wont, for these com-

pliments, and the soft entreaties that he would take more care of himself, which were daily administered by his voluble landlady, in one form or another, merely acknowledged them with a half-bow, half-nod, threw himself upon a large cool cane sofa that was set apart for his special use, laid up his legs upon it, and having established himself to his satisfaction, took up a huge ostrich feather fan, which was another of his especial accommodations, and began to fan himself assiduously, for he was heated, wearied, and disappointed.

George, meanwhile, had been brewing a Brobdignag rummer of sherbet, such as are used in hot climates, perhaps, because the very sight of such a sea of cool delicious beverage, refreshes the mind, whilst a slender portion of it suffices for the moment to slake the thirst. Having eyed the welcome refresher, with evident satisfaction, and swallowed a huge draught

of it, the Captain became more composed and more communicative.

“I wish people would know their own minds,” quoth the honoured guest; the ladies’ ears expanded and quivered like those of the blind leader of the Great North Mail when such things were; for if the said blind leader’s ears served him instead of eyes, those of the two ladies were at least equally sensitive and alert.

“I hope nothing has happened to cross you, Captain?” said his fair hostess, in a tone intended to prove that, if she was desirous to know what had happened, the wish proceeded much more from personal regard for him, than from mere vulgar curiosity.

And so the honest seaman understood it.

“Why,” he said; “as I am among friends I will speak out.”

He hesitated. What a tingling of ears was there!

“I told you,” he resumed, “that I should probably remain a few days longer than I had intended, to accommodate my friend, Sir Edwin Chartres, who was always rather slack in his movements. I had put myself to no little trouble to induce my ship’s agent to consent to this, and when I went to him this morning to tell him what I had done to please him, I found, to my utter surprise, that Sir Edwin did not mean to go with me at all! Isn’t that enough to put a man out?”

“Well, Captain,” replied his acute and calculating hostess, for it was precisely a case within her comprehension; “if the rich Baronet should change his mind and not go after all, he must pay forfeit, you know. He had no right to take his passage and then to call off.”

“Confound it !” broke out the Captain, “but he never had taken his passage. I had talked about it before him without contradiction or interruption, and I made sure of his going; but Sir Edwin is an honourable man, and I have no doubt he had been thinking of something else, whilst I was mistaking his silence for acquiescence. No, Mrs. Clackwell, I will not deny that I am very much disappointed, but it’s wholly my own fault.”

The Captain stretched himself at full length upon the sofa, laid a silk handkerchief over his face to protect him from the flies, which are the curse of Cape Town, and fell asleep.

The ladies retired together, to discuss, and to comment upon, this great piece of news; and so indefatigable were they in the vocation they loved, that before night, all Cape Town, with the sole exception of those most interested in the matter, knew that Norah Darcie was to

become Lady Chartres forthwith; and some of those who were amongst the last to hear the news, had the advantage of knowing that the wedding-day was absolutely fixed;—a very important point, respecting which the first promulgators of the rumour still remained in profound ignorance.

No one was astonished,—no one had ever doubted that it would be so, though they did not wish to contradict their friends who thought otherwise; and every one was perfectly satisfied of the accuracy and infallibility of his judgment and prescience upon all other subjects, as much as in this striking instance of it.

CHAPTER III.

WE left our friends in the Petrel amazed and bewildered at the strange disappearance of the pirate brigantine. They were satisfied that she could not have passed them in the night, and Bombay Jack was positive that if she had entered the port of Quiloa she must still be there; for though the high land which formed the starboard side of the entrance to that harbour was an island, he asserted there was only a boat channel on the other side of it, and even that point of exit was, from the

narrowness of the island, so near to their night anchorage, that if it had been possible for her to pass through that way they must, they thought, have seen her. A strong ebb-tide was running out at daylight, and when it ceased, they found that the water had fallen twenty feet, even at their anchorage outside ; which, as Bombay Jack had warned them, was a much larger rise and fall of tide than they had hitherto experienced on that coast, making their position more difficult.

The Petrel weighed with the first of the flood, and with her boats prepared to tow or check her, dropped into the harbour's mouth ; for though they had now and then a cat's-paw of wind from the sea, the ship was by no means always under command, whilst the soundings were extremely irregular.

The greater part of the shore, now the tide was low, consisted of a soft deep mud, whilst

in places, especially on the starboard hand, were rocks, with deep water close to them. They were soon within the very entrance of the harbour, and appeared from aloft to command a view of its whole extent,—yet no vessel could be seen in it.

Captain Daunton looked at the pilot.

“We see, sir—we see. Ship no can go through de land. I know him harbour well.”

The tide now began to whirl them on with great rapidity close along the rocky shore on the starboard hand, and frequently so near as to create great apparent danger; for it was precisely at these points that the water was very deep, and the bottom so rugged with sharp rocks, that nothing short of the most imperious necessity could justify an attempt to anchor. It sometimes seemed as if you could leap upon the rocks; but as the ship advanced, the muddy banks, and shallows predominated

more and more. Still no brigantine could be discovered.

At length, on rounding the only bluff point on the larboard hand, a shout arose. There lay the brigantine hauled close in under the clump of land, moored head and stern, with her topmasts altogether struck; so that she had been concealed by the slightly elevated land, till the Petrel approached the centre of the harbour. She had evidently been hauled in at high water during the night, and lay shored up on a mud bank, which was now only partially covered with water.

When the Petrel hoisted her colours, the brigantine showed the flag of the Imaum of Muscat, most probably supplied to him by Omar Aga, for his late comrade, El Fra Diavolo, as Herbert observed to the Captain, had set up no pretence of the kind.

“’Tis strange, Herbert,” said the Captain,

“that fellow should not endeavour to embarrass us here amongst these shoals, by opening his fire upon us, whilst we could scarcely return it. But that’s his concern. He shows no disposition to fly.”

“True, sir,” said Herbert, “and our business with our short carronades, is to get as close to him as possible, before the action shall commence.”

The vessels were now within half gun-shot of one another, perfectly land-locked, and between them lay a huge mud bank, which the flowing tide was rapidly covering.

“There’s a breeze coming on the water, sir,” said Herbert, “which will enable us to bring her up by the stern, as you proposed, and with an anchor under foot we may keep our broad-side bearing upon him.”

Whether the pirate had flattered himself that the Imaum’s colours would protect him,

or had some other object inducing him to allow the Petrel to approach unmolested so near, it was difficult to say ; but just as the Petrel had dropped her second anchor, and secured thereby a most advantageous position, the brigantine hauled down the Imaum's colours, hoisted her own red flag,—the bloody scourge of nations, and opened a heavy fire.

But the error he had committed was fatal to his ship. The Petrel's thirty-two pounder carronades, at that short distance, were too much for her battery, and in less than twenty minutes her guns were nearly silenced, and the vessel cut to pieces, without his having inflicted any very important injury upon the Petrel. But his colours were still flying, his deck still well manned, and he continued to fire a shot at intervals, as if in defiance.

The boarders were called away, and the boats, commanded by Herbert, Anstey, and

Yarker, Darby Darcie, and Tandy, were about to start, when poor old Grogson, who had been whitewashed, of course, by a day of action, begged hard to be permitted to go.

Whilst the boats had been preparing on the off-side of the ship, the Petrel had renewed her fire, which was kept up as long as it could be sustained with safety to the boats.

“I see men landing from the pirate, sir,” reported Mr. Marliner.

“Have as little as possible to do with the shore, Mr. Herbert,” said the Captain; “and should you find it necessary to land, do not allow yourself to be drawn to any distance from your boats. The destruction of the brigantine is our chief object, recollect.”

The boats started, and as they approached the enemy, a sharp fire of musketry was opened upon them, and was returned by the marines in the boats, with great steadiness and effect.

“I fancy,” said the Captain, “I saw a movement on the crest of that steep hill ; and yet I see no one. Watch that point, Mr. Marliner, closely. I must follow the movements of the boarding party.”

“If there are men there, sir,” said the master, “they are so covered by the bushes, that I can see nothing of them.”

Cheers from the boats now announced that the dash was made, and the firing of musketry having ceased, every manœuvre was distinctly seen from the Petrel. The pirates made a desperate effort to repel the boarders, but in vain ; and after a severe struggle, the boldest of them having been cut down or bayoneted, the remainder leaped overboard, and made for the shore.

Herbert, with the boats, pursued them closely, and the Captain soon beheld his men chasing the routed pirates up a narrow wooded

ravine, with some anxiety. But Herbert was mindful of his instructions, and was himself fully satisfied that he had much to lose, and little to gain, by a headlong pursuit, in a wild jungle.

“Mr. Herbert is returning to the boats, sir, and collecting his men,” reported the master.

“I see them. The pirates have landed in considerable numbers, and as they selected this place for their last stronghold, and have had a whole night to complete their arrangements, I expect to see our party attacked yet ; possibly with native allies. There has been something mysterious and incomprehensible to me, about all their proceedings.”

“There it is then, sir,” exclaimed the master. “The rascals have just broken through a screen of bushes, and are training a heavy gun. Now they have it on the crest of the hill, levelled at us.”

“I see,” replied Dauntton; “I expected something, but not exactly that. But they can be seen from the beach, and Herbert is getting his men into the boats. It is now evident why they allowed us to come so close in without interruption. Man the small gig—go, Mr. Somers, and point out to Mr. Herbert what they are about. He must carry that gun.”

Bang came a shot between the Petrel’s masts, but without striking the ship.

“That’s a heavy gun,” said the Captain; “our carronades won’t reach it; but give them the six pounders.”

“Poor pop-guns these,” muttered Dauntton; “but they may bother the rascals.—Aha! Herbert sees his game now: that shot has opened his eyes.”

Herbert, in fact, while preparing to return to the captured vessel, either to complete her destruction, or tow her off, had just espied this

new danger, by which the contest was to be prolonged.

He knew the gun must be carried, or the Petrel would inevitably be sunk, as to withdraw her beyond its reach, while becalmed, and surrounded by shoals, was impossible.

Hastily reconnoitring the hill, Herbert perceived that the ascent was steep and difficult, but affording cover for marksmen, and whenever the enemy came sufficiently forward to point, and fire their gun, which they could not do except at considerable intervals, they must more or less become exposed. He instantly resolved on two objects : first, to carry the gun at all costs ; secondly, to be as careful of exposing his brave fellows as duty and circumstances would permit.

Anstey, with Tandy, Sergeant Mills, and a select number of marksmen, were immediately thrown out, to ascend the hill cautiously, each

man seeking cover for himself as well as he could.

“The enemy are bad shots, my lads,” said Herbert; “but proceed warily, and let no man escape you who shows himself; I will support you in all directions.”

“The Seccalava knows this place well, sir,” said Chouchow, touching his hat, “and he thinks you in great danger, as it is the pirates’ practice to aim almost entirely at the officers; and particularly the officer in command. If you will trust him, he will lead you through a difficult secret pass in the ravine, which will bring you upon their rear.”

“But may we trust him, Chouchow? It is possible he may intend this as a trap, knowing it will insure our destruction.”

“I think not, sir,” replied Chou.

At this instant, a shot was fired from the hill, and they heard it strike the ship, for it was calm and still.

“Grogson,” said Herbert, “tell Mr. Anstey I intend to attack the rear of the pirates’ position, with Yarker, Darcy, and twenty men ; the rest, leaving a small party to guard the boats, I place under his orders. He must advance cautiously, and when he hears us cheer, he must make a rush at the gun, with his whole force. Now you have an opportunity of redeeming yourself.”

Herbert and his party ascended the ravine rapidly, under cover of the jungle, led by the Seccalava and Chouchow, who, as interpreter, was no less necessary.

Anstey, meanwhile, disposed his men to the best advantage ;—masses of rock, and trees, abounded in every direction, and the enemy’s musketry, though kept up briskly, was ill directed. Thus Anstey was able to reach a sheltered point, from which he commanded a favourable view of a small part of the natural

platform where the gun was planted, and placing four of his best marksmen to watch for the two men occasionally in some degree exposed in pointing, and firing the gun, he and Tandy, and two others, lying in reserve, prepared for a second shot at them, should they escape the others ; and in this way they would necessarily render the gun useless.

Daunton and Mr. Marliner, on board the Petrel, watched these proceedings with deep interest.

“There’s a party working their way up the front of the hill, from cover to cover, sir,” said the Master ; “I think I make out Anstey with them.”

“Yes,” replied the Captain, “and Herbert is dividing the rest into different parties. He knows what he is about. But see, he is turning up the ravine again, with a small body of men. Possibly he will try to find his way

up through the jungle, so as to attack them in flank or rear. It is a desperate game, for the enemy must be too well acquainted with his position to leave any part open."

"Surely, sir," observed the Master, "he has got a native guide to lead the way? look!"

"It's the Seccalava. He, like the rest of the pirates, is clearly used to this place—but it is an awful risk to trust such a fellow against his own comrades; and yet, if he proves faithful, it will save us many lives, Marliner. Only for that, Herbert would have stormed the hill at once; but he was always thoughtful for his men."

"Yes, sir," rejoined Marliner, "much more so than for himself. But the Seccalava saved Herbert once before, you remember, sir. They are advancing up the hill, well supported, and will soon bring the rascals within range."

“Stand fast firing those pop-guns, lads ; down below all hands, and let every man stow himself away, out of the reach of shot, as well as he can, till I call you. Carpenters must get their shot plugs ready. We can’t move the ship at present, Marliner ; but if they should strike her between wind and water, we must slip the stern-cable, and paying out the bower, sheer the old craft across the tide upon the mud bank. She’ll stand a deal of hammering there.”

“Yes, sir ; but I suspect Herbert will soon spoil their sport, and make mince-meat of them. It is said they are not all men of colour, and this is not unlikely, judging from the tactics they have displayed. But there’s another flash. We must look out, sir.”

This shot had been pointed with a truer aim, and struck a quarter-deck hammock stanchion, and then one of the six-pounders,

which stood on the quarter-deck, smashing the carriage to splinters, one of the largest of which knocked down Daunton, who was taken below senseless.

Anstey's marksmen caught a glimpse of two of the pirates at the gun and fired, cutting one down, while the other sprang up in the air, and then fell lifeless over the rocky ledge. Enraged to hear the shot crash into the ship, and encouraged by their partial success, a few men, headed by Grogson, quitted their cover, and rushed recklessly on. Anstey peremptorily recalled them; but before they could regain cover, a volley of musketry was poured upon them, by which Grogson was killed upon the spot, and one of his followers wounded.

Anstey, however, now succeeded in advancing to a covered position, from which he commanded a much better view of the enemy's movements, whenever they might

come forward with their gun, which had recoiled out of sight. The main body of his men was collected behind a range of rocks, which entirely concealed them, from the enemy, and stood like greyhounds on the slip, waiting impatiently for the word which was to urge them forward.

The time was fast approaching; for Herbert had not lost a moment, and was rapidly ascending the ravine.

“Keep your eyes about you, lads,” he said. “We must not give them time to fire another shot. Our party on the hill-side are gaining ground, as we may gather from the report of their muskets, and we shall soon be upon them.”

They kept on at a trot, fearing only that their comrades, under Anstey, would carry the position before they could come up. In the interim, it became clear, that the ravine was

leading them up the country, in a line parallel to the enemy's position, and in no degree diverging towards it ; but they saw that Herbert placed full confidence in his guide, and they were satisfied.

Herbert had himself been painfully aware of the unsatisfactory direction they were still pursuing, though he abated nothing of his apparent trust in the Seccalava ; but in reality, his suspicions were alive, and he watched warily against ambush or surprise, determined to sacrifice the Seccalava on the first sign of treachery.

Suddenly the Seccalava halted ; no outlet was seen, nor had the direction of the ravine in the smallest degree changed ; but its sides had become more rocky and precipitous.

The guide beckoning to Herbert, drew aside some withered bushes, and pointing to a cleft in the rock, which they had concealed, dived

into a narrow dark pass, just wide enough for one man, and was instantly lost to sight. This was the crisis of their fate; but Herbert, ever prompt in action, well knowing that hesitation has always a fatal effect upon the moral energy of followers, plunged in unhesitatingly after the guide, followed by the whole party in single file.

When they reached the light, they found they had entered a narrow water-course, running nearly at right angles with the ravine, and consequently leading directly towards the rear of the eminence occupied by the pirates. Herbert halted a moment to breathe his people, and placed himself with Darby, who never quitted him, at the head of one division, intended to fall suddenly upon the enemy, whilst the other, under Yarker, followed at a short distance, as a reserve, to cover his rear and flanks, or support him, should the

enemy consist of one single body, in front of them.

Whilst this had been going on, Anstey had remained quite passive, biding his time, as he now felt assured that he could shoot down any of the enemy who should advance far enough forward from their cover to place the gun in position, and to point it. Watching keenly with his pocket telescope, he saw the muzzle of the gun slowly advancing. He held up a finger, which was the preparatory signal, and his sharp-sighted companions were on the alert. At length two men became in a slight degree exposed; but Anstey, from his present position, could see distinctly that they must advance themselves much farther forward before they could make the gun available; and he coolly watched their movements until the two first men, evidently hesitating, a ruffian of commanding stature and appearance stepped

somewhat before them : Anstey thought he must be a European. The three now drew, or rather with handspikes, as it would appear, began to push forward the gun rapidly. He gave the signal to fire. Two of the three fell, the third, their leader, drew back, pressing his left arm to his mouth, as if hit there.

A loud murmur arose amongst the pirates. Herbert heard this distinctly, and it served to mark his distance from them. He felt that his task was all but accomplished, and drew his sabre in readiness.

“Now follow, Yarker, at a short distance,” he whispered, “and when we give a cheer, you repeat it. I shall push straight at the gun, and spike it. As you will protect our flank and rear, we have nothing to apprehend, but only to push on and strike home.”

Advancing to the edge of the jungle he found himself within a few yards of the enemy,

who, though very numerous, were wholly unaware of his approach ; and alarmed by the deadly results of Anstey's last fire, they were apparently squabbling who should proceed to point and fire the gun once more ; for it was now in position, but no one was desirous of the honour of precedence in the undertaking.

Herbert plunged, sabre in hand, into the throng, giving the concerted cheer ; and hardly had it resounded from Yarker and his party, when it was taken up by the larger force under Anstey, who were now rushing on, in spite of the extreme difficulty of the ground, and the fierce but ill conducted resistance of the enemy. The sound of their voices announced their rapid advance.

There were still, however, amongst the surprised and confounded pirates, some few daring spirits, one of whom, a huge scar-disfigured mulatto, met Herbert hand to hand.

He was not an enemy to be despised; but whilst Herbert was fully occupied with this bold antagonist, a swarthy stalwart European, with a handkerchief bound round his left arm, as if to cover a flesh wound, and whose harsh, forbidding countenance inspired disgust, greatly heightened now that it was swelling with rage, and quivering under bodily pain, stealthily approached, and had already raised his stiletto, when Darby, whose only thought was to guard the life of his too daring friend, shot him dead, just as the mulatto sank beneath the sabre of Herbert.

CHAPTER IV.

THE pirates, intimidated and paralysed in their operations by the deadly fire of Anstey's marksmen, were astounded to find the British cheer arising from three different parties, whilst they were desperately charged in their rear, where they had considered themselves quite unassailable, as nothing short of treachery could lay open to an enemy the secret access to their position, so obscurely connected with the ravine. They were now charged in front, also, by the main body under Anstey. Most

of their leaders had been killed or wounded, whilst their gun was carried at the sword's point; and thus overwhelmed, they threw away their arms in despair, and rushed in a body to the jungle.

It was no part of Herbert's plan to pursue them. All resistance had ceased, and the different divisions of the Petrel's uniting upon the rocky platform, round the captured gun, announced their victory to the ship by three cheers.

The captured gun, which proved to be an old reamed out eighteen-pounder, carrying thirty-two pound shot, having been well spiked, a reinforcement was immediately sent off to the small party in charge of the boats, one of which was, as soon as possible, despatched to the ship with their four wounded men. Poor old Grogson had been the only person killed.

“Yarker,” said Herbert, “take a strong party and turn the gun over the edge of the precipice on the other side of the hill. There’s a deep jungly gully beneath it, where the gun may lie unobserved for centuries; but knock off the trucks before you launch it. Here are plenty of handspikes and crowbars to work with. Collect the ammunition scattered about, Sergeant Mills, into that little cave, and place a sentinel over it, or I shall have some of these careless fellows blowing themselves up.”

“I was delighted to hear your cheer, Herbert,” said Anstey. “I did not like jungle work for you.”

“Right, my dear fellow,” replied his friend, “but I was anxious to save your brave fellows taking the bull by the horns, if I could, by making a diversion. You led your men beautifully. It is sometimes difficult to keep

our brave fellows from running their heads against a wall."

"They were perfectly steady," said Anstey, "till poor Grogson, who was half crazy with joy at the thought of retrieving his character, broke out, and led some few men unnecessarily under the enemy's musketry. He was brave, but never had any self-control. Poor fellow! he is gone now, and died gallantly. He had his failings; but though a weak man, he never was a bad one."

"I quite agree with you," answered Herbert. "But what is all that bustle at the edge of the jungle? Here comes Chouchow."

"They have murdered him, the villains!" said Chouchow, panting for breath from very rage. "The villains have murdered him, sir."

"Who? what?" exclaimed Herbert, turning very pale, and looking anxiously around him; for Darby Darcie, who seldom left his side, was nowhere to be seen.

“No, sir,” said the sagacious Chow, who perfectly comprehended the cause of Herbert’s agony; “not him, not Mr. Darby, sir, but the poor Seccalava.”

It would be an untruth to say that this explanation was not a great relief to Herbert; and yet he bitterly regretted the loss of his faithful guide.

“Poor fellow!” he said; “he was faithful to me; and gladly would I have rewarded his services.”

He proceeded, under Chouchow’s guidance, to a small clear spot, some twenty yards within the jungle, and there lay the unfortunate Seccalava—not only dead, but pierced and slashed frightfully by the knives of the revengeful fugitives. Darby was standing over him, crying, and vowing vengeance upon his cowardly murderers.

Who can say what had passed in the mind of that poor untutored heathen, when

struggling between what he considered to have been his duty towards Herbert, who had given him his forfeited life, and his natural repugnance to betraying his old associates?

“Who knows anything about this?” inquired Herbert.

“Sir,” replied Chouchow, “some of us were following the runaway pirates, who were flying for the narrow passage by which we got here from the ravine, when we heard a terrible scream, and rushing to the spot, found the poor fellow surrounded by five or six of the runaways, all cutting and slashing at him, like so many mad devils. We killed this couple, who were too eager at their bloody work to hear us coming. The rest got off.”

“Oh, Mr. Herbert, give me only half a dozen volunteers, and we’ll overtake these cowardly murderers yet. Do remember that this poor fellow saved both you and me.”

“ I do, Darby, and would have done much to save him ; but we have important duties to perform. Take Chouchow and a party which Mr. Anstey will give you, and remove our wounded carefully to the boats ; and on no account lose sight of them, until you shall have placed them safely in Mr. Danvers’ hands, in the hospital ; this is a duty of the highest importance.”

“ Alas ! ” he added to himself, as he gazed upon the mutilated body and distorted features of the poor ignorant wretch, whose fate had become so suddenly and so strangely interlaced, as it were, with his own, “ this poor heathen seems to have sacrificed all his feelings and prejudices to a sense of duty, and to have suffered a cruel death, aggravated probably by being called a traitor, as the reward of an action, which I really believe he performed from conscientious motives ; and who

shall presume to decide on his merits and demerits? Such a spirit, enlightened by the Gospel, might have endured martyrdom. He who gives or withholds light will be merciful to those who stumble for want of light. How much then does it behove us, who are so highly favoured, to take heed to our own ways, and to be slow to judge others!"

Anstey, who had been superintending the various operations relative to the captured arms and ammunition, now approached the dreadful scene which had so much interested Herbert, and of which he had heard from Darby.

"Take the cutter, Anstey," said Herbert, "and examine the prize; but first secure the magazine, and throw all loose ammunition overboard. The Brigantine is so smashed, we cannot make her seaworthy; but if she can be floated into deep-water outside the harbour,

the Captain may prefer sinking her there to burning her here. You will soon see if we have the option."

"Here comes the small gig from the ship," observed Anstey, "as they approached the landing-place."

Young Somers, who landed from her, now delivered a note to Herbert, who changed colour as he read it, whilst his eyes filled with tears.

Somers had whispered the fatal news to his young comrades, and it soon became known throughout the party, that Captain Dauntton had been severely, it was feared mortally wounded, by the last shot of the enemy.

The exultation of victory was lost in one deep feeling of regret. It cannot be too often repeated that, even in those old reckless times, when their wild and extravagant freaks were matter of wonder, our seamen always appre-

ciated the worth of their officers with almost unerring tact, and felt strongly the loss of those who were particularly respected by them.

Leaving Anstey to complete what yet remained to be done, Herbert, who was much shocked at what had befallen his gallant chief, hastened on board to ascertain the real state of the case, hoping that the truth had been exaggerated, and trusting that the vigorous constitution, abstemious habits, and strong nerve of Dauntton, might yet falsify even Danvers' apprehensions.

The Surgeon, upon examining the wounds, had found the left arm broken, and the ribs on the same side beat in, with symptoms of severe internal injury.

"It is a lost case, I fear, Marliner," he said in deep affliction; for no man knew poor Dauntton's worth better. He had been in con-

tinual co-operation with him in carrying out all his views for the health and comfort of his men; attention to which objects is one of the most important duties of the Captain of a man-of-war.

Blood followed the lancet. The patient revived, and soon became quite sensible.

"Yes," he said; "yes, I remember." Then looking up at Danvers, he added, "I feel that it's all over with me."

"I hope not, sir," replied Danvers hesitatingly.

"Yet it is. I feel it; and you know it." The voice was faint, but the tone was firm.

"Danvers," he resumed, "if operations can save me, proceed, and fear not; but if, as I feel persuaded, there is no hope, let me die in peace. I feel that my time is short, and there is much that I wish to do whilst my head is clear."

"Herbert has carried the enemy's position, sir," said Danvers; "they are completely routed. Our people, sir, have just given three cheers to announce their victory."

"Thank God!" said the wounded man, "I had just sent our poor fellows here to shelter in time; none of them were, I hope, hit."

"No one, sir, thanks to your consideration for them."

Daunton smiled, and looked steadily at Danvers.

"My own feelings," he said, "and your countenance, my good Danvers, tell me that I have but a short time to live; may God be merciful to me! Bring pen and ink. Let all reports go to Herbert," he added to Marliner, who was entering the cabin.

"Herbert is a noble fellow," he said. And he murmured to himself, "and poor Miss Darcie, too! I must do what I can to serve

them. I felt that I should never see her again. It's strange, but I felt assured of it. Heaven grant I may live long enough to explain myself to Herbert !”

Danvers now returned with his writing-desk, and seated himself, to write whatever the Captain might dictate.

“I have been, under God, Danvers, the architect of my own fortunes, such as they are,” said the dying man, “and have no relatives. That which during forty years’ of labour and danger, I had set aside for the support of my old age, I would fain dispose of worthily.”

He stopped a minute from weakness; for although he suffered little pain, or suppressed all appearance of it, if he did, still his strength was evidently, though not very rapidly abating.

Danvers administered a restorative, and urged him to make as little effort as possible.

“I will be very concise,” he replied, “for I

feel my time to be short. Write down my words."

And he dictated as follows :—

"I, Edward Daunton, &c., do give and bequeath all of which I die possessed, to Lieutenant Frank Herbert," &c.

The Surgeon proceeded to do this in the simplest possible form of words, well knowing that an ignorant misuse of law terms has marred many a bequest. He then added dates and other indispensable forms.

"I think," muttered the dying man, "I may thus make two excellent young people happy; for assuredly the want of money will be the only bar to their happiness; and Herbert is worthy of his mistress."

Mr. Marliner was called in to witness the signature of the will, which was deposited in a certain drawer of the *escrutoire*, which Danvers, by the Captain's direction, locked.

Herbert's arrival was announced, and Danvers hastened up to receive him, having been charged, by his suffering friend, to say nothing to him about the will.

"I am quite able, thank God," he said, "to explain my views to him myself. A few minutes will suffice for all I have to say; and then, my good friend, I much wish you would return to pray with me. Something is getting wrong within me."

Herbert was listening to the statement of Mr. Marliner, relative to the Captain's wound, when Danvers came up with the message.

"Our poor friend," he said, "has but a short time to live; but, thank God, I do not think that he suffers much, or that he will do so; violent internal hæmorrhage will in all probability carry him off suddenly. He is quite calm and composed, and it is important to

keep him so. Any violent mental emotion, or even any hasty attempt at a material change of posture, might prove almost instantaneously fatal. Go to him, he expects you. I will look once more at my patients in the hospital: send for me as soon as he requires it."

Herbert was deeply moved when he saw his excellent old Commander lying propped up with pillows so as to preserve his position on the couch. He was deadly pale; but a faint smile overspread his honest manly face when his young friend approached. Herbert wept, but the gallant sufferer was quite firm and composed. It was only from an occasional twitch about the mouth that it could be supposed he was suffering.

"Listen to me, Herbert," he said in a low faint voice. "I prayed that I might see you before I died, and I now feel that I shall be

enabled to say the little I have to say :” he stopped short for a few moments to rest himself. “Like you,” he resumed, “I have greatly admired Norah Darcie; you will be a happy man, Herbert, if you marry her; and I think you would make her happy.” Again he paused; and Herbert, greatly astonished, wondered what could be coming. He looked up earnestly at the dying man; but, pale as that face was, and feeble as was his voice, the one was still lightened up with even more of intelligence than usual; the other was calm, steady, and unwavering, though faint and low.

“I have no relatives,” he said; “I have stood alone in the world. That sweet girl has deeply interested me, and I would fain act a father’s part towards her;” again he stopped. Herbert had become absorbed in his words, and he trembled lest poor Daunton should be unable to conclude what he had so

strangely commenced; for Danvers had told him that his death would be sudden, and that exertion or emotion would too probably hasten it. Daunton closed his eyes and lay some time perfectly quiet; at length he resumed, still more faintly—

“I was in pain, Herbert,” he said; “but, thank God, it has passed away. I began to fear you had come too late. Mark me, Herbert; I would act as a father to Norah Darcie, and I would have her become your wife. The great obstacle, I presume, would be want of fortune. I have a considerable sum to leave; and it appears to me, that if, as was my first intention, I should leave it to Norah, it might make your chance of acceptance with her father more hopeless than it is. I have left the money, to you as the best means of making you both happy. Now say not a word, Herbert, but send for Danvers.”

He closed his eyes once more, and seemed quite exhausted. It would have been cruel and ungenerous to have disturbed his dying hour with acknowledgments and protestations; and poor Herbert, forbidden to give utterance to his feelings, overpowered with surprise and gratitude, had sense enough to obey mechanically, and sent for Danvers. For some minutes the dying man remained perfectly still, with his eyes closed. Herbert and Danvers watched him anxiously, but silently. At length he once more opened his eyes.

“Not a word, Herbert—not a word,” he said; “I have done with this world. Danvers will give you the key of the escrutoire where the papers are. Tell her, how the old man loved her, and prayed for her happiness, and did what he could to secure it; and God bless you, my dear friends! You have been kind

and faithful friends to me; may the blessing of God rest upon both! I feel that my time is short; pray with me,—pray for me.”

Again he closed his eyes; but his lips moved in prayer, while Herbert and Danvers knelt by his couch. His feelings had not deceived him. And ten minutes afterwards, the brave, the generous Dauntton, the penitent believer in his Saviour, the faithful servant of his country, was a corpse. Yet he had risen that morning in high health and spirits—loved and honoured by all around him.

CHAPTER V.

THE gloom that overspread the Petrel, as soon as it had become generally known that Captain Daunton was really dead, was very striking.

The men spoke to each other in whispers, and trod the deck lightly over the lifeless body of the man they had loved and honoured.

The Officers were even more distressed. A thousand instances of his cool self-possession in sudden emergencies were recollected and related, whilst his kind considera-

tion for all was affectionately dwelt upon. No point of poor Dauntton's character had been so uniformly conspicuous, or so fully appreciated, as his unceasing solicitude to guard his men and officers from all useless or unnecessary exposure—either to the sword of an enemy, or the more insidious and far more dangerous effects of climate, always much aggravated by exposure and unwholesome diet. This care of others had stood out in beautiful contrast with his utter disregard of danger in his own person, which had been so strikingly exemplified in the last act of his honourable life.

Herbert's feelings, of course, were more especially affected by this sad and sudden bereavement; for he had looked upon Dauntton as a father. It was to him he owed his position as the First Lieutenant of the *Petrel*, which had been procured with difficulty for so

young an officer; and by the last generous act of his life, he had raised him to independence. He had done all he could towards promoting his union with Norah, while he reposed unlimited confidence in him.

He was still more touched that his poor friend, in his last sad moments, amidst pain and suffering, amidst his last humble supplications for pardon and for peace, husbanded his failing powers to enable him to complete his generous project, even after he had declined all other connection with the world; and thus, on the very brink of eternity, with the calm deliberation which had formed so remarkable a feature of his character, he had given full effect to his kindly purposes.

Such were the thoughts which occupied Herbert's grateful and affectionate heart, as he mourned over the mutilated remains of his friend and benefactor.

Men constantly liable to the imperative calls of duty, may not indulge in the luxury of grief, cannot fold their hands to weep and pray, and to lament in privacy, but they do not the less strongly and bitterly feel a sad bereavement. How long Herbert had remained absorbed in grief, he knew not, but the hour for resumption of work had arrived, and there was much important duty to be attended to. Danvers undertook to arouse him, as his presence on deck had become indispensable. He entered the cabin gently.

"Anstey," he said, "unwilling to intrude upon you, has requested me to remind you that he waits your orders, upon points which he cannot decide without you, and which brook no delay."

"Thanks, my dear friend," replied Herbert, "both to Anstey and to you. I leave everything here to your care. We will of course

take the honoured remains of our lamented friend to the Cape for burial: you will attend to that; but how are our four wounded men getting on?"

"Two of the cases will, I think, do well, though the generally reduced state of the health of our people is against them. One must, I fear, suffer amputation; for the fourth I have little hope; but it is too soon to decide yet."

Herbert proceeded to the quarter-deck.

"Send an officer with a party, Anstey, to bury poor Grogson. That small island in the centre of the harbour will be secure from wild beasts. You shall go on this duty, Darcie, and bury the poor Seccalava too. I should not like his murderers, who may still be prowling in the jungle, to wreak their savage vengeance on his remains: you and I owe him this consideration, now we can do no more for him."

“Let Mr. Marliner prepare kedges and warps; we must take the first possible opportunity, Marliner, to warp the ship to the entrance of the harbour, clear of these mud banks, and at a sufficient distance from the brigantine before we burn her and blow her up.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Marliner, “but there are sails on board her that would make us a capital set of awnings, which we so much want, and small cordage too.”

“Go, then, and look out whatever may be useful to this ship; for poor Captain Daunton’s fall has stupified me. Be back before the tide serves for moving the ship.”

“We have nothing for it but to burn her,” observed Anstey. “It would be impossible to float her even across the harbour. These carronades do their duty well at a short distance.”

"I leave it to you to take measures for completely destroying her there. She has done us mischief enough. Spike her guns and throw them overboard; but, pray be cautious in your arrangements for blowing her up. There's plenty of powder on board her, you say?"

"Plenty; and it may appear childish, but I confess I shall feel, in blowing her up, as if I was avenging our Captain. I shall never forget his uniform kindness to me during my long illness, and how cheerfully he himself performed the duties which ought to have been mine. He was a noble fellow, Herbert."

"Quarter-master," said Herbert, turning away to hide his emotion, "send the pilot here."

"I see no appearance of a town, or even of a village, here, pilot," he resumed; "but you know the place better. I understood there was a settlement here: surely we might get some cattle for our people?"

“I fraid! no, sare; but toder side dat high land at harbour mout, dere is castle, and Arab Gobenor, sare. Dat oder entrance to de harbour for Dows; him make trade der, no can see castle dis side.”

“How am I to get to the castle?”

“You take boat round back de island, him long way round, much shoals, much mud bank. I go too, but I fraid no hab bullock; we see.”

To procure cattle immediately was of the utmost importance to the health of the crew, especially to the sick and wounded, and no chance must be lost. Danvers urged this strongly.

“Anstey,” said Herbert, after a moment’s reflection, “do you carry on the duty here, and send Yarker to prepare the brigantine for burning. I must try, if it is possible, to get cattle for our poor fellows.”

Taking Bombay Jack as pilot and interpreter, he started in the gig. They had a very wide circuit to make, from the shallowness of the water ; but after rowing some miles, they reached the North Channel, and advanced up it seaward, until, upon rounding a high rocky projection on the starboard-hand, Herbert beheld, all at once, a small dilapidated castle nearly over his head. He saw also the mouth of the little channel, which was not more than fifty yards wide, with a large dow running in from the sea, before a light breeze, which failed her as she entered, whilst the whole garrison were rushing down with shouts and screams of joy, as if her arrival had been an important and long expected event. This, indeed, was probably the case, as she was laden chiefly with grain.

Light coir ropes were thrown to the rabble from the vessel, and they began to drag her on

towards the landing-place, at the foot of the castle, with all the gesticulation and clamour, which invariably accompany any united effort amongst the rude Arabs.

Herbert having climbed the steep and rugged ascent,—for road it could not be called, to the Lilliputian castle, surrounded by a jabbering squad of the natives, mounted by a few broken and deranged stone steps, to a sort of verandah, which ran along the whole front of the building, and was evidently made to serve many purposes. It was open to the sea-breeze whenever that luxury of tropical climates blew home, which, situated as the castle was, could be but rarely, and therefore it was most often close and hot.

Herbert had expected to be presented to a sullen, haughty, and troublesome greybeard, like Omar Aga, and was not a little surprised to behold extended upon a rich divan, which

occupied a recess in the centre of the verandah, a languid, sickly-looking, but remarkably handsome young Arab exquisite, superbly dressed, with a richly ornamented pipe in his hand, a splendid sabre lying by his side, and a still more superb dagger stuck into a rich sash.

There was a strikingly high caste air in the calm quiet manner of this youth, for he could not have been more than twenty-two or three years' old, as he rose for an instant to offer the stranger a most graceful and polished welcome ; and then sank back into his former picturesque attitude, as if exhausted with the effort. With a gracious smile he besought him to be seated upon an embroidered silk divan near him, where a splendid pipe was presented to him, which the great man himself condescended to light. Coffee and sweetmeats followed ; the former strong and gritty, having been made from the bruised berry, as is the

Eastern practice from Mecca to Constantinople. The striking incongruity between the rude and broken steps which led to the presence chamber, and the rich elegance of its furniture, equalled the extreme difference between this refined and delicate youth, and the rude, riotous, filthy horde around him.

But Herbert saw at a glance that whatever might have brought the high-bred individual before him into such a place, it was quite clear that he had been long accustomed to power and luxury, and like many of the high born and wealthy in our own land, blasée upon all points, he felt even luxury a bore. The cup of true enjoyment is but of moderate capacity, and he who tries to pour therein more than it is calculated to hold, because his mental blindness sees not its limits, only wastes the precious fluid.

Some compliments passed ; but the Arab

Adonis, indolent, proud, and apathetic, made no allusion to the destruction of the pirates who had hoisted his own colours ; although every circumstance of the conflict must have been familiarly known to him. His chief, he said, the Imaum of Muscat, was at peace with the King of England ; and he offered his services with as much dignity as if he had the resources of an arsenal at his disposal, although when he descended to particulars, all he could undertake was, to procure a few bullocks from the interior in a week or ten days, which would probably have turned out to be a month ; so little is punctuality in business, or the value of time thought of amongst these people. Thus Herbert was obliged to give up all hope of procuring the supplies he so much needed.

Under other circumstances, he would have been highly amused at the puppet-show

he had witnessed ; but such a caricature of military pomp, and Oriental splendour, where the single step which is said to separate the sublime from the ridiculous was removed, now only irritated him. In this mood he returned to the ship.

He found waiting for him on board the Petrel a dark, strong built middle aged man, dressed as an Asiatic ; but, as Herbert suspected from his countenance and manner, a European. He spoke a little French ; said that he was a merchant trafficking in the interior for ivory and gold, of which he offered upon sale considerable quantities, if the ship would wait two or three weeks for it ; though it was strongly suspected that he knew more of a British man-of-war than he was disposed to own. He would not undertake to procure immediate supplies, and gave such evasive answers to all attempts to procure useful in-

formation from him, that it became evident his object was not to give information, but to gain it; and yet it was not easy to imagine what his motive could be. He appeared to possess no ordinary share of general knowledge, and was exceedingly inquisitive.

“How long,” asked Herbert, with Danvers’ assistance, “have the Arabs possessed this part of the coast, for the castle is certainly a Portuguese building?”

“Why,” replied the mysterious stranger, “just as long as the English have held Bombay.”

“It is strange, Danvers,” observed Herbert, when the visitor had departed; “but I have always, in the most remote and uncivilized regions, where commerce of the smallest kind was practicable, found this sort of citizen of the world; active, intelligent, and cunning; and however different their origin, displaying

a similarity of conduct. They are, I suppose, the pioneers of civilization. Who, or what this man may be, it would be difficult to say; but that he is very shrewd and knowing is unquestionable, though it would appear his objects are sinister."

There was much grave and earnest activity on board the Petrel, the important duties assigned to the different working parties were zealously performed; but there was no merriment, indeed, no cheerfulness of manner. The loss of poor Dauntton weighed heavily upon all.

Late in the afternoon, it being near high-water, the ship was warped out to a clear anchorage, near the harbour's mouth, ready to sail out with the land-wind in the morning; and every preparation having been made to insure the total destruction of the brigantine, they waited for low-water, to give every ad-

vantage to the fire. The people were then withdrawn from her, and the combustibles, which had been collected and placed in her to the greatest advantage, were lighted. There was a breeze off the land, which helped to stimulate the flames ; a few barrels of pitch and tar placed at intervals, threw up a strong and brilliant light, and the fire soon spread fore and aft, till she became one mass of flame, making a splendid but melancholy object, on a moonless night. When the more combustible matter was reached, a pyramid of fire shot high into the air, and dark figures were seen on the beach close to her, hurrying backwards and forwards, and gesticulating like so many imps of the evil one, whilst their wild shrieks and yells resounded over the whole harbour.

“I thought so,” observed Herbert, who, from the Petrel’s deck, was with Danvers and Marliner watching the progress of the flames:

“I thought so,” he repeated; “these people, not having been pursued, have loitered in the neighbouring jungle, and seeing that we did not attempt to carry off their vessel, have been flattering themselves that we should leave her in such a state as, in their desperate condition, would make her or her contents in some degree available to them. They are now undeceived.”

The boats began to arrive; and scarcely had Anstey, who had conducted the operation, come alongside, after having seen all the others beyond danger, when the explosion took place. It was magnificent! Burning spars, and timbers glowing with red heat, were cast on high, and scattered far and wide. Some of them were seen to fall amongst the group of pirates on the beach near, and probably crushed many of them.

Such was the fate of the pirate brigantine, whilst the remnant of her murderous crew

were left, many of them wounded, to starve and perish upon a barren and inhospitable shore ; the natives of which were so widely scattered amidst rivers and inlets of the sea, that it was not probable they would ever reach them ; and if they should do so, it was pretty certain that they would meet with just such a reception, as they themselves, when in power, were wont to give to strangers ; unless there should chance to be a Portugeze slave ship on the coast ; in which case, a cruel death might be commuted into slavery for life in Brazilian mines.

At day-light Herbert saw that their work had been effectually performed, and making sail before the land breeze, they were soon once more in the open sea, beyond the pestiferous exhalations from oozy shores, and horrid looking mud banks, extending for many miles in all directions.

Herbert's first care was to learn from Danvers the condition of the wounded men, and the sanitary state of the crew in general ; and there was ample ground for serious alarm upon both these points.

The atmosphere of such harbours as Quiloa is extremely prejudicial to wounds, which frequently assume a green colour, and show a disposition to gangrene ; but both fever and diarrhœa were rife in the ship, and on the increase. A change of diet was declared to be indispensable, and Bombay Jack was summoned.

"I must find supplies somewhere," said Herbert : "where on this coast, or on the Archipelago bordering upon it, shall I be most certain to find cattle? I must not again be disappointed."

"No place so sure, sare, like Pemba."

"But Pemba lies far to the north. To go

there will be to lose time, and increase our distance from the Cape. Marliner," added Herbert, "see your course and distance to Pemba. Here's the monsoon close at hand, too, pilot; remember that."

"Spouse you will have bullock, no can help: no can be sure oder place."

"How are you so sure that we shall find bullocks at Pemba?"

"I dere two time, sare; people gord mans, plenty bullock, plenty plantain stalk, plenty ebery ting to Pemba, sare."

"Is it the island belonging to the Imaum of Muscat?"

"No, sare, him long to one Galla Prince, on de main land, close near. Pemba man neber fight: him chief send two, tree man ober for tribute; no Galla man lib dere."

"Do you know a harbour there for this ship?"

“Bery good harbour when in him ; all coral dere, no tinkee mud bank ; him narrow to get in, but plenty deep ; run in mid sea-breeze, run out mid land-breeze, plenty wide for dat.”

Marliner now reported the course and distance. The latter was considerable ; but there was no alternative, and Herbert reluctantly shaped a course, which took him so far out of his homeward track, for he was more than ever anxious to make the best of his way to the Cape.

Nothing is more trying than a positive necessity for prolonging indefinitely a voyage, the object of which has already been fully accomplished, because it has become indispensable to sacrifice all other considerations to the welfare of wounded men and a sickly crew. It was a painful and tedious run to Pemba : the winds were light though fair, and our impatient young Commander looked wistfully at the

passing bubbles, which proclaimed how slowly they were advancing. His frequent consultations with Danvers were any thing but encouraging, and amidst all the anxieties incident to a commanding officer under such circumstances, every thing around him was continually calling to his remembrance the fate and the melancholy presence of the remains of his friend and benefactor, whose place he so reluctantly filled. He knew nothing of the recent changes in the situation of the Darcies ; and felt that it was but too probable, that in consequence of this ill-omened delay, they would almost certainly have left the Cape on their way to England before he should arrive.

Herbert was neither in health nor spirits. One misfortune seemed to lead invariably to another : he began to feel feverish himself ; and, strange to say, his only solace was to discuss with Darby that most painful question :

whether there would still be a chance of finding the family at the Cape. But Darby had lost his cheerfulness; for the doubt was painful to him on many accounts; and still they could talk on no other subject. There was perhaps a magic in Darby's countenance, and above all in his voice, which more than compensated poor Herbert for the pain he inflicted upon himself by dwelling so much upon this excruciating doubt; for every day that passed reduced his hopes, and heightened his fears. He was indeed extremely unhappy.

CHAPTER VI.

It was not until the fourth evening after the Petrel's departure from Quiloa that they sighted Pemba, a low, level island, with a few small hills rising here and there. It lay about ten or twelve leagues from the mainland ; was prettily wooded, and appeared to be fertile.

The western and sheltered side of the island is surrounded by coral reefs, connected with the land, forming together an almost continuous labyrinth of shallow harbours, communicating with the ocean, and with each other,

by boat channels only. There was but little wind during the afternoon, and the Pilot pointed out two hummocks of land towards the northwest end of the island, as marking the entrance of the best harbour. The night proved to be calm, and at daylight the Petrel was about three miles from the spot indicated by Bombay Jack, as the opening in the reef; the appearance of which, at that distance, was by no means promising. It would appear that the island was altogether a coral formation, and must be continually extending itself towards the mainland by means of this submarine process.

Mr. Marliner having been sent with the Pilot to examine the anchorage, made a favourable report of the harbour; but the entrance, which was a narrow channel between two reefs, though it had nowhere less than five fathoms depth of water, was very narrow,

only indeed passable with a leading wind ; as, for half a mile, there was scarcely, if at all, room for a ship to swing to her anchor. But this was of little consequence where there is almost always a land-wind and a sea-breeze in the twenty-four hours.

About three in the afternoon a light sea-breeze sprang up, and they steered for the entrance of the harbour. The water, as usual, was beautifully transparent ; and the edges of the reefs were distinctly visible, with deep water close alongside them. It was hazy over the land, and dark rainy clouds hung on the tops of the low hills, though over the sea all was bright, and the sun very powerful.

“ Should it fall calm as we near the land, sir, which is very probable,” said Marliner, “ I think, with fresh way on her, when she has once entered the channel, she’ll shoot into the anchorage, the water is so smooth.”

“At any rate,” replied Herbert, “I will have the boats ready to tow.”

Just as they had passed about half-way up the channel, and had reached the narrowest part of it, a sudden puff of wind off the land took their sails aback. Herbert, though by no means expecting this, was fully prepared for any change; the men were stationed for shortening sail, and an anchor was ready.

“Shorten sail, Anstey—quick,” and not a moment was lost. “Clew up, haul down, lower away,” and all sail was reduced. “Starboard a little—starboard,” he added, quietly. “Step forward, Marliner, for this rain is blinding us; she has way enough to answer her helm yet; the wind is rather across than down the channel. We must anchor as close as possible to the weather shore, or she won’t have room to swing head to wind else, without tailing upon the lee shore. Give me the word,

for you will be able to see the reef forward, though I cannot do so here."

Mr. Marliner sprang forward to the bowsprit ; for the rain descended in a deluge, far beyond a common rain in the tropics.

" Furl the sails, Anstey," said Herbert, quickly, " and point the yards to the wind, for I must bring her up very short. Stand by the small bower anchor."

The buoy had been removed from the anchor, as the water was so shallow and so clear.

" Now, sir," shouted the master, from the bowsprit.

" Let go the anchor," cried Herbert, and the heavy splash was instantly heard.

" Snub her, Mr. Yarker—snub her ; hold on now : stop her," he added ; " we have no room here for stern boards."

The ship brought up ; for the breeze was not heavy, and as the sails had been promptly

furled, and the yards pointed to the wind, she rode light upon her anchor.

Mr. Marliner rushed aft, to see whether, as she must ride nearly across the channel, the reef on the lea side would not catch her heel.

“We are very close to the weather-reef, sir,” he said, as he passed Herbert; “but I know there’s nothing to spare here.”

“I think she will clear it,” replied Herbert; “but at any rate the water is very smooth, and I think the wind is already dying away. This torrent of rain will soon beat down the wind; but we have entirely lost sight of the land, near as it is.”

They watched the ship from over the quarter, as she slowly swung round to her anchor.

“Mr. Yarker,” said Herbert, “run out a kedge to the weather reef. We may check her, or hold her off the rocks by that, if it continues so moderate. Pass the warp out at

the larboard after port, and stretch it along the deck, ready for hauling upon."

The order was instantly obeyed, and he returned to where Marliner was anxiously watching the gradual approach of the ship's stern to the rocks.

"She'll clear it yet," said Herbert, "unless the wind should get more to the northward."

"It's a close shave, sir," said Marliner, as the ship's keel crunched a few light stems of newly formed coral, projecting from the more solid mass.

"Haul taut the warp," said Herbert; "there is less wind: we may keep her from touching again."

The wind fell, the dark deluge passed off seawards, but heavy clouds hung upon the hills, and the repetition of similar occurrences was more than probable.

The sea-breeze was soon seen rippling the waters in the offing.

“Up anchor,” exclaimed Herbert ; and the Boatswain’s call resounded shrilly through the decks.

“Up anchor, a-hoy,” growled a peculiarly rough voice, echoed by the Boatswain’s mates, and in an instant the capstan was running round cheerily.

“We must run it right up to the bows without a stop, lads,” said Herbert.

A slight hurrah replied.

“Boys and idlers to the stern warp,” said Herbert ; “boats a-head.”

“Heave and aweigh,” shouted the Boatswain from forward, piping the appropriate call, the drummer and fifer struck up a lively air, there was, as Herbert had required, no stop, no stay.

“Heave and awash,” was heard in that same cast-iron voice.

“Paul, ho!” followed ; the capstan was

pauled, the capstan bars were unshipped, all the boats were a-head, with tow-ropes, the light sea-breeze reached the ship; the warp to the reef had, by drawing over the ship's stern in that direction, brought her head in a direct line with the direction of the channel; the yards were squared, and she began to advance slowly but steadily, without the aid of sails, as the distance they had to go was short, and Herbert had no wish to be taken a-back a second time in the narrows. The haze over the land thickened as they advanced, and a small boat was sent to mark the spot at which they were to anchor, for the landmarks they had taken were no longer visible. Scarcely had the anchor been let go, when another deluge burst upon them; but they were now secure in a land-locked harbour; and Herbert lost not a moment in placing his men under shelter in dry clothing. For an hour this

heavy rain fell steadily, and while it lasted, the land around could not be distinguished, though the harbour was small.

At length it ceased suddenly; a glorious sun burst forth, the mist was gone; and all at once, as by the shifting of a scene, or the drawing up of a curtain, the whole bright and beautiful panorama flashed upon them. It would be difficult to conceive anything more brilliant—a mixture of wood and verdant plain, dotted with trees, amidst which (for the extent seen was small, and close to them,) were clumps of orange trees laden with produce, in every stage of growth, from the sweet-scented blossom to the golden fruit, a peculiarity which, with the deep green of its varnished leaf, confers singular beauty upon a tree which is itself of decidedly ugly form. Palm trees, in great plenty and variety, abounded; but what was more rare in those

regions, and more refreshing to their sight, was the greensward here and there glowing with vivid freshness, for Pemba is one of those fortunate islands, which, though lying so near the equator, is, from a happy combination of local advantages, blessed with frequent showers all the year round. But the most striking, and pleasing object was a pretty and irregular cluster of native dwellings,—a village, in fact, on the slope of a hill, ending in a natural terrace. The cottages—for so they might properly be called, had a very ornamental appearance, and were almost surrounded with small, neatly cultivated patches, which our admiring mariners chose to call gardens.

Herbert's heart beat joyfully and gratefully as he thus found himself, at so critical a moment conducted to a land of promise.

The ship was moored with a stream anchor,

and Bombay Jack was despatched to the village, Danvers and our young Middies going with him, whilst Mr. Yarker was sent with another boat to examine a watering-place, pointed out in a different direction by the pilot.

“I wish,” said Herbert to Anstey and Marliner, who with him were examining the different points of the harbour with their telescopes. I wish we could see the natives moving about ; but there is not a canoe on the water, nor can I see man, woman, or child anywhere about the village, though all looks to be in order.”

“I saw,” said Marliner, “for an instant two boys upon the reef there, at the extremity of the harbour ; but they suddenly started off and disappeared. They seemed to have been occupied in gathering shell-fish.”

“I see our party entering the village,” said

Anstey ; and all three directed their attention thither.

“They go from cottage to cottage,” observed Herbert ; “but they do not enter any one of them ; they must have been deserted.”

“Yes,” observed Anstey ; “but Bombay Jack spoke of the natives as a remarkably timid race. Perhaps they had never seen a ship in their harbour before ; and our appearance there all at once, upon the sudden clearing up of the weather, might well have startled them.”

“True,” said Herbert ; “for it is quite clear that these are not deserted or neglected dwellings. They cannot have been long gone, and consequently cannot be far off.”

“The Doctor and the rest of the party are returning towards the boat,” observed Marliner, “and Bombay Jack has proceeded alone towards the interior. He will soon

overtake the fugitives, for their women and children must be with them, and most probably their cattle too."

"Well, Danvers," said Herbert, as the Doctor advanced up the quarter-deck, "I fear you bring us no good news. The village appears to be deserted."

"Quite so," replied Danvers; "but so recently, that I do not attach importance to it. Bombay Jack is known to some of them, and they speak a kindred language, which the Joannese readily understand. We found only two old bed-ridden crones, who were so terrified at the sight of strangers and white men, that I would not allow them to be questioned."

"Well, Darby," resumed Herbert, "and what did you see?"

"Why, sir," answered Darby, resuming his occasional brogue, "we saw a beautiful cow tied up, in all respects like a Christian cow."

It did one's heart good to look at it ; but unluckily 'twas Tandy who was poking his long neb everywhere, that first saw it ; and the poor baste, being no judge of beauty, took fright at him, and bellowed and plunged more like a mad bull than a decent cow. It must have naturally been a quiet sort of a creature too, for it had a sort of a pack-saddle on it ; so I suppose they ride cows here and milk their horses."

" It bellowed just as much when you or Mr. Danvers went near it," said Tandy, who was rather tenacious upon the subject of beauty.

A boat was sent before sunset, as had been arranged, for Bombay Jack.

" Well," said Herbert, " where are these people gone to ? Shall we get the cattle ?"

" I soon find him, sir ; him 'fraid ebery ting. Him neber see ship in dat harbour all him life. Him hear dat long time go, one black

ship come dere ; rob, kill ebery body. No hab see de ship come ; when rain clear way, dere lay black ship, what fader's fader tell of ; dey tink him same black ship come gin, so all run away."

"You explained to them what we came for, and that we will pay for all they will sell us?"

"I do dat, sare ; him know me ; him send egg, fowl, and oder *ting*, present for massa. To-morrow him bring bullock, goat, every ting here close to ship."

"Take what has been brought off to the sick bay," said Herbert, who new felt himself certain of immediate and abundant supplies, and that night he slept soundly for the first time since poor Daunton's death.

The morning came ; — eight o'clock, nine arrived, but no appearance of natives. All was still as death in the village. Bombay Jack

was once more despatched. Some new cause of alarm must have arisen.

The pilot soon returned with a very long face. The son of their tyrant had arrived from the mainland, well attended, and accompanied by his father's minister, an old Joannese of detestable character. Bombay Jack knew the old villain, who had fled from Joanna to escape deserved punishment, and who, being equally crafty and unprincipled, was a fit agent for a savage despot. They had forbidden all intercourse with the ship. The natives, who stood in great awe of the old Joannese, complained secretly to the pilot, for they were desirous to supply the ship on moderate terms.

"I suppose," said Herbert, "all your rascally old countryman wants is to be handsomely bribed? I will pay him any reasonable sum to open the market at once."

“Him great rogue; no can tell what him want. Him do ting sometime cause him love mischief. I see, I hear what him say, and tell massa.”

“Invite them on board. I will find presents for them. Pay them,—do any thing; but cattle I must and will have.”

“’Spose you take cattle, nobody can help, only den dis old rogue man he punish dese poor people here.”

“That must not be,” said Herbert, horrified at the suggestion; “try and arrange a meeting for me on shore or on board; I will manage them.”

After much negotiation it was settled that a hut should be erected on the beach, and a meeting was fixed to take place there the following morning, soon after sunrise. Meantime, a personal attendant of the young Prince, as the natives called him, was sent on board with

compliments. He appeared to be a sort of henchman, the same age with the Prince, and was well armed, active, powerful, and good-looking. Every attention was paid to this youth, and great pains were taken to make his visit agreeable to him ; but he was grave and unsocial. He had evidently been sent to examine the ship's armament, no part of which escaped his attention ; but that which chiefly surprised, and appeared almost to fascinate him, was the thirty-two pounder shot. He was never wearied of looking at them, turning them over and handling them. He declined wine, but drank a glass of rum. It chanced to be in a showy cut glass, which he admired so much that it was given to him.

What his report to his master was, can only be guessed by the result, for soon after he had returned to the shore, both he and his master

disappeared. The heavy shot had so frightened them that they were seen no more.

Herbert gave instructions to Bombay Jack, who was very acute, and hated his countryman, the old Minister, as they called him, by which, through the natives, he got minute information as to the plans and proceedings of their mortal enemy, and took his measures accordingly. He presented the old man with a showy dragoon's jacket, and received in return a worthless trifle of native produce.

"I only wish," said Herbert, "that the natives should be permitted to sell to us a part of their stock, which they are anxious to do. I know your position here, and when you return my visit and permit trade, I shall present you with twenty-five dollars for your good offices."

The old villain's eye, for he had but one, sparkled at the thought of getting such a sum ;

but Herbert, who watched closely the expression of his sinister countenance, saw clearly that fraud was intended, and took his measures to defeat it.

At two in the afternoon the old Joanna man came on board in a large native boat, with all the pomp he could muster. He was received with corresponding honours, and was soon after invited below ; for although Herbert could not prevail upon himself to take possession of Captain Dauntton's cabin, he of course used it for official purposes. A table was set out with refreshments, and upon a black japanned waiter were scattered the twenty-five dollars.

The old man's eye glanced greedily upon the glittering prize ; he was all smiles and compliances. But Herbert, who knew the true value of his word, had, on descending to the cabin, given Mr. Anstey a note, in which he

was directed to rig out a small stage on the starboard bow, and to reeve a rope at the fore-yard arm, ready for hanging the old Joanna man ; the officers to be in attendance, and the marines under arms, with a muffled drum. He was also directed to send Mr. Yarker in the cutter to a creek about two miles to the northward of their harbour, where he would find a swift canoe, with four men, which he was to seize and bring round to the ship, laying off upon his oars near the ship, with the canoe in tow.

Anstey was exceedingly surprised at these orders ; but he knew that two men had died that morning, and that Danvers had been pressing upon Herbert that, without fresh provisions for the crew, he could not hope to check the progress of disease.

Whilst these arrangements were in progress upon deck, all was high good humour in the

cabin. After starting many absurd difficulties, and telling many gross falsehoods to enhance the merit of his pretended compliance, his eye constantly reverting to the shining dollars, the old man gave his consent that the natives should be permitted to sell what they pleased for the use of the ship. These palavers were infinitely tedious ; but Herbert was in no hurry, for he had much to prepare for the close of the conference.

“I understand, then,” he said, “that we are to receive, at a fair price, as much of the island produce as we wish for.”

“So soon I go shore I give leave for all, Cap’n.”

“You had better send one of your men on shore with the order at once,” said Herbert ; “and then you may take the dollars as payment for the permission.”

One of his men was sent for, and having

received private instructions from the old rogue, was sent ashore.

“Now take the money,” said Herbert, “and do as you have promised honestly.”

“So help me, Allah, as a honest man !” said the old man, clutching eagerly at the dollars ; “now, Cap’n, I go shore. Plenty ebery ting come now ;” and he grinned with exultation at the thought of having outwitted the white man, as he secured his treasure in the folds of his girdle.

Young Tandy announced from Mr. Anstey that all was ready on deck, and Mr. Yarker was in sight with the cutter.

“Very well,” said Herbert ; “send Bombay Jack here.”

“You say,” he said, addressing the old man, “that you have sent orders to open a trade directly ?”

“I send him wit dat order,” he replied boldly.

“I, sare,” said Bombay Jack, who was now present, “I tell him he no do dat. I hear what he said ; he tell him, no make no trade.”

Herbert looked sternly at the old scoundrel, who quailed before him ; but in an instant recovered his assurance, and contradicted his accuser.

“Villain !” said Herbert, “I’ll hang you for a lying, cheating old rascal. You think you have deceived me, and robbed me ; but I have seen through all your tricks. Take this man upon deck,” he added.

The Joannese was instantly taken hold of by a corporal of marines, with two privates. Herbert put on his cocked-hat and sword, and proceeded to the quarter-deck. The prisoner knew enough of English ships to set little value upon Herbert’s anger and his threats ; but the fear of being compelled to refund the dollars was most bitter to him. When, however, he

saw the whole of the officers in uniform, the marines under arms, and the whole crew drawn up, evidently upon his account, he began to be alarmed.

“Are you all ready forward?” said Herbert in a stern voice.

“All ready, sir,” answered the gruff boatswain. He was standing on the stage, adjusting the noose of the halter with great composure.

The prisoner having now had time to consider this state of things, had with piercing glances sought to find some lurking smile, or some other symptom in the countenances of the officers, especially the younger ones, which might confirm his hope and belief that all this was a hoax, got up to frighten him ; but all were grave and serious, as indeed they well might be, for they were wholly ignorant of Herbert’s intentions.

More than once the expression of the old Joannaman's countenance had changed from insolent defiance to deadly fear; and these changes had not escaped Herbert.

"Once more," he said calmly to the prisoner, "I desire you to send immediate orders on shore for the supplies you promised, and for which promise I have already paid you."

But the old man, encouraged by his seeming hesitation, took courage.

"I hab send, Cap'n," he said. "Spose them take fright, no send; 'fraid to send. Dat your own fault. Let me go shore, I send ebery ting. I true man. I neber lie. I promise I do all."

"You cannot deceive me," replied Herbert. "If I let you go on shore, you will stop the supplies and fly to the mainland. I can see your intentions. The lives of my sick men

depend upon these supplies; and I will have them."

Neber, Capn—so help me Allah!—I neber tink to run away. De Prince, he take de boat; I no tink no such ting."

"Lead him to the other gangway," said Herbert.

The old Joannaman raised his eye, and saw his swift canoe, with her crew, lying in tow of the Petrel's boat: his heart sank within him.

The white chief had, then, really seen through all his arts: his craven spirit fell into the extremity of superstitious terror; he believed that Herbert had read, and could read, every thought of his heart; that here all his trickery and falsehoods were vain and useless. The formidable preparations for hanging him were, then, a frightful reality! He ventured one searching glance at Herbert's countenance; it was cold, stern, and contemptuous. An awful

roll of the muffled drum sounded the note of preparation; a slight rattle of arms followed.

He threw himself at Herbert's feet in an agony of terror, pouring forth confessions, and entreaties, and promises; and, before it could be prevented, kissing the feet of the man to deceive and rob whom he had, until that moment, flattered himself would be no difficult matter.

An order was instantly despatched by one of the old villain's boats-crew to open a free trade. Bombay Jack heard the order given, and accompanied the messenger. The natives, who had impatiently awaited it, were prepared; and in two hours Herbert received on board ample supplies, including ten fine bullocks, with small stock and poultry, fruit, vegetables, and plantain stalk. He had strong reasons for these decisive measures, as his hospital was crowded, and the malignity of the disease was

increasing as rapidly as the number of its victims. Every hour's detention in this hot, close harbour was increasing an evil already fearfully extensive, whilst he perceived evident symptoms of the approach of the monsoon, which, with its storms and fogs, and deluges of rain, promised them a return through the Mozambique channel of the most dangerous and laborious description, such as his crew, in their present enfeebled state, were by no means fit to contend with. Indeed, the fever had begun to attack the officers, and himself among the rest.

Having embarked all he wanted, and paid the poor natives liberally, he lost not a moment in availing himself of a light air of wind off the land, and, with his boats a-head towing, made sail out of the harbour.

The prisoner, in terrible alarm, saw himself unnoticed, save only by a sentinel who watched

him, and the ship under sail. He crept to Herbert's feet.

"No hangee—no carry way!" he said. "Take de dollar—take ebery ting. I neber tell no more lie."

"Miserable knave!" said Herbert, "never hope to deceive white chief. Be kind to these poor islanders; or when I come again——" he pointed to the fore yard-arm, where the fatal rope was still rove. "Keep your dollars; what I give, I never take back. Stand up: take your canoe and go."

The trembling wretch did not require to be told this a second time. He sprang upon his legs, grasped his waist-cloth anxiously, with both hands, to satisfy himself that his beloved treasure was safe; for he had no doubt that Herbert, who saw every thing, and knew every thing, could have conjured it away, if he would. Then, after another prostration, he stepped

into his canoe, and paddled swiftly up the harbour.

Man must be seen in various states of existence, and under a vast variety of conditions and circumstances, calculated to mould and to form his views, tastes, and habits—his nature, in fact, before it is possible to form any conception of the infinite differences of human character.

Spiteful, revengeful, and ill-disposed as the Joannaman was, he felt no anger or ill-will towards Herbert. On the contrary, he admired him beyond measure ; and his first act when he landed, whilst there was yet time, was to send off a boat laden with the choicest produce of the island as a present, accompanied with every expression of respect and admiration. This was a natural feeling, in the peculiarly superficial stage of corrupt, unwholesome, false civilisation, which gave to this detestable old

rogue a degree of power and influence amongst the rude and ignorant barbarians of the coast, which he so unscrupulously employed for his own sinister purposes; whilst the very treasure he was thus acquiring by crime, was certain to prove the immediate cause of a cruel death at the hand of his savage masters. So shortsighted is cunning!

Every petty success was an additional proof of his superior genius. Truth and honesty were in his eyes either weakness or hypocrisy, and incapable of estimating character by any other standard than his own vile principles, he had very consistently concluded that Herbert was a cleverer rogue than himself,—the first he had ever met. Accordingly he both feared and honoured him, though the fact of his having been allowed to keep the twenty-five dollars somewhat lowered Herbert in his eyes, till he came to the conclusion that he must

have had some deep mysterious motive in this matter beyond his comprehension.

“Muggles has been boasting that he weathered upon you in that matter, Harry,” said a young officer to a friend.

“There is no accounting for taste,” replied Harry. “I paid the penalty of having mistaken Muggles for a gentleman, on the presumption of his coat. He is welcome to his triumph; but had he accused *me* of having tried to weather upon *him*, as he terms it, I should have resented the imputation.”

The Petrel was now clear of the close damp harbour, and free to make her way to the Cape. Her mission had been fully accomplished, but at a fearful cost, involving the life of Dauntton. But his spirit seemed yet to hover over the ship, now freighted with his inanimate remains. Herbert, too, still declined to take possession of his cabin and

effects, unless it were occasionally for official purposes, though all was his own. He never entered the cabin without a chill at his heart.

Leaving Anstey and Marliner to secure the cattle, and to prepare the ship at once for bad weather, he summoned Danvers to the cabin.

“How many on the list to-day, Danvers?” he said.

“Twenty-eight, of which five are new cases,” replied the doctor. “Three have died, and there are now seven convalescents ; but these last are in a very reduced state, and to most of them a relapse would probably prove fatal.”

Herbert looked more grave. “Thirty-eight,” he said ; “and five short of complement before. Forty-three working hands out of a sloop of war’s crew, with such a passage before us ! I trust, Danvers, with the supplies which we

now have, the complaint will not extend farther."

"I hope not," replied the doctor; "at any rate, full diet is of the highest importance to our convalescents, and to the more numerous class now attacked with threatening symptoms. I felt for your difficulties in contending to-day with that old villain, Herbert; but if he had continued obstinate, it would have been awkward either to hang him, or to let him go. Your dilemma might have been disagreeable.

"You may be well assured that I had no intention to hang the carrion," replied Herbert; "but I had little apprehension of being driven to that extremity. I had learned from Bombay Jack the particulars of his career, and was quite satisfied of his flexibility. Having both his avarice and his cowardice to work

upon, I had no doubt of success when once I had him on board. I could not allow our poor fellows to perish in the midst of abundance, neither could I take by violence the property of those poor islanders, who, mild as they are, would probably have resisted manfully, and the possibility of shedding their blood was horrible. Heaven be praised, Danvers, we are clear of that difficulty, and out of the hot harbour, too."

Mr. Marliner, who had been sent for, now entered with charts and books. Captain Timmins had given him a later and better chart than that which had previously been their sole guide.

We must leave them, to consider their route for the Cape, taking into consideration the various dangers in their way, weak handed as they now were, with the currents, the storms, and the fogs with which the approach-

ing monsoon would be certain to perplex them. It was at present nearly calm ; but there was every appearance of approaching bad weather.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR EDWIN CHARTRES slowly improved in health. The return to India, to which he had looked forward almost as his death warrant, was now out of the question. The return to England, so long the unattainable object of his most ardent wishes, had become not only open to him, but his duty imperatively summoned him thither, not to exist there upon an income wholly inadequate to his station in life, but to enjoy a splendid fortune : to perform in fact the duties of an English country gentleman, in

the administration of a large unencumbered estate. This is a situation of all others upon earth, perhaps, the most enviable. Happy is the man, and much to be honoured, who in so favoured a position, is as much alive to the important responsibilities attached to it, as its great personal advantages. Truly contemptible is he who views the latter only, disgracing his name, his caste, and his country.

No man could be better qualified for his new position, or more conscientiously disposed, than was Sir Edwin ; and the mean, perverse, sordid conduct of the late baronet, whilst it had left the brother for whom he had always felt a jealous dislike, to reap the rich harvest of his short-sighted avarice, had also bequeathed to that brother a host of injuries to be redressed amongst his tenants, dependants and poorer neighbours. With the gradual restoration of health came a check to that lassitude of

body and mind, which had succeeded to his long supported exertions, far beyond his natural powers, and only sustained for the time by a noble and generous spirit. Once more under milder but equally generous springs of action, that fine mind was recovering its natural tone, though still weak. The important matters which summoned him to England, began to assume their due weight and influence.

The Darcies were in safety ; and much as he admired Norah, still as a young and lovely girl, living quietly with her parents, however amiable and attractive, she was no longer surrounded by the dangers and difficulties which had thrown around her a halo of romance, and awakened his chivalrous disposition. Chartres began to see things in their true and natural aspect, and he had now ample leisure for reflection. His friend Rushton had gone to Stellenbosch for change of air. General

society had no attractions for him, nor was he equal to its indulgences or its restraints.

Mrs. Darcie was in better health, but she recovered her strength and spirits slowly; and although Norah was as lovely as ever, her spirits appeared to depend wholly upon those of her mother. Every shade of care or anxiety that might chequer the assumed cheerfulness of the one, was instantly reflected as in a mirror upon the expressive countenance of the other; one and the same ruling spirit appeared to control both.

Sir Edwin now passed much of his time at the Mount, and as days flew past, the Petrel's whereabouts and her probable return to the Cape, were frequently discussed there.

"I cannot forget, mamma," said Norah, gravely, upon one of these occasions, "how strangely low-spirited Captain Dauntton ap-

peared on the evening before we left them. He made me almost as dejected as himself."

"It was strange certainly, my love," replied Mrs. Darcie. "You, Sir Edwin, who know the calm, firm, equal temperament of the excellent old captain, would have been astonished to hear him declaring his settled conviction that he should never see us again. He had become quite superstitious about it."

"I can readily conceive it, my dear madam," said Chartres, "for neither age nor reason can guard us from such fancies."

The baronet evidently said this with more earnestness and more depth of feeling than the case required.

"When do you think," said Emma, who never much liked any considerable pause in conversation, "we may expect to see the Petrel with Darby and Mr. Herbert and all of them?"

"I really cannot guess, my dear," replied

Chartres, to whom the Pet had addressed this question ; “but I hope very soon ; and that reminds me, Mrs. Darcie, of a very large brass-mounted telescope, which, as my present house commands no view of the sea, is quite useless there, but would be a great source of amusement to the young people here, where you overlook the bay. You must do me the favour to accept it.”

Norah looked up at her kind friend most gratefully. How often had she wished for one, when some distant speck in the offing had awakened her hopes, and kept her for hours in painful suspense.

By slow degrees the General had become less, and Mrs. Darcie more satisfied, with Chartres ; not that there was much change in his tone and manner, but each of them saw instinctively the first dawn of a change of feeling, as his mind recovered its elasticity. He

himself was utterly unconscious of any such change. Indeed, much as he had admired Norah, deeply as he had been interested for her, and exquisitely as he enjoyed her honest unaffected simplicity, conversation, and amiable demeanour, he had never for a moment formed any deliberate intention of striving to gain her affections. His mind had been a chaos ; he had been the mere creature of impulse ; and with his returning energies, his natural delicacy and humility, had already begun to suggest to him the vast disparity in their age, the great difference in their character. Though this abated nothing from his regard for the fair object so calculated to excite the admiration of all that was refined and chivalrous, it did yet, to a certain extent, modify the expression of it.

The telescope was sent ; it was a powerful instrument ; and every vessel which entered

the bay was eagerly examined, but no Petrel appeared.

Sir Edwin was sitting on the following morning looking over such of his letters and papers from England as he had not as yet found leisure or inclination to give much attention to. Some of them appeared to interest him greatly.

“This affair of Jenks and Sparling,” he muttered, “requires my interference ; and the law-suit with Burke must be ruinous to his family. Yet proceedings in both cases are postponed, I see, at great expense, to await my decision. Lambert, who was conducting these and other troublesome matters for my brother, relies, it seems, implicitly upon my immediate return to England, and has not therefore furnished me with the means of forming any such opinion here. It is clear, in fact, throughout, that my correspondents give me credit for

knowing something of these affairs, though my brother had not written me a single line for twelve years."

Again he plunged into the mass of papers.

"It is unquestionable," he resumed, after a time, "that I ought to go to England; and not quite so clear why I should not have resolved to go with Timmins. But he is to sail to-morrow morning early, and that renders it impossible now."

He heard a familiar footstep,—and Timmins stood before him.

"Ah!" he said, "you are come to take leave of me. I almost wish I could go with you; but it is too late now."

"Not at all—not at all," said the Captain, joyously. "I came to tell you, that our agents have purchased a shipwrecked cargo, to send home by me; and I shall be here perhaps a fortnight longer, if that will suit you."

“I am glad to hear it, my good friend; and though I cannot absolutely decide so important a point off-hand, I will secure your accommodations for the voyage whether I go or not. It has more than once occurred to me that you might have been a sufferer by my indecision before : I now engage my passage. But you must promise not to mention the circumstance, as I have a great horror of having my little sayings and doings made the subject of idle gossip; and as I have hitherto escaped scot free in that respect, I should like to preserve that immunity.”

The Captain could not but smile to hear his talented and philosophic friend congratulating himself upon having escaped scot free hitherto from the gossips of the place, to whom he had been an inexhaustible treasure; for, not content with gazetting all that he said or did, they had recorded of him, in the

same tone of assurance, much that he had not done, or even thought of doing. Timmins, however, promised faithfully to keep his secret; but was so overjoyed at this unexpected piece of good fortune, that he astonished Mrs. Allclack and George by returning home in most exuberant spirits, although they had seen him only an hour before, bitterly lamenting the trouble and expense his agents had subjected him to, by stopping his ship so suddenly after every thing had been embarked in readiness for sailing the following morning.

The Allclacks were experienced boarding-house keepers ; and they knew the full value of Captain Timmins. George hastened for the soothing sherbet, of the most skilful brew; the lady insisted upon the dear Captain resting upon the sofa, after all his fatigues ; blessed her stars that she was to have the

dear Captain's company so much longer ; called Angela, her own slave girl, to fan him to sleep, for she could not bear to see him lie with that silk handkerchief over his face, which heated and stifled him, whilst the feather fan would keep the flies away better.

The Captain was a happy man, and enjoyed a sound nap. And Mrs. Allclack was made particularly happy by receiving, next morning, a handsome new breakfast-set from the Captain ; but she was not long quite happy, for although she was convinced something important must have happened to produce so sudden and so violent a change in Timmins's appreciation of his sudden detention, in vain did she assail her honest unsuspecting guest upon all his weak points. The Captain, to his great honour and glory, preserved his friend's secret, though he was dying to tell it.

“Have you heard, General,” said Captain O’Gorman to his chief, “the strange report said to have arrived from the interior?”

“I have heard it,” replied the General; “but it cannot be worthy of consideration. How should such a report find its way from so distant a part of the coast? Depend upon it, this has its source much nearer home—probably in Cape Town itself.”

“Barwell, the Flag-Lieutenant, tells me that they have endeavoured to trace it; but, as far as they can learn, it has certainly come from the interior.”

“What is this grave consultation about?” said Major Singleton, walking into the General’s room.

“Have you not heard a report,” said his friend, “which has pervaded the whole town, which nobody professes to consider worthy of attention, but which clearly makes a painful

impression upon all,—that two ships of war, after a severe fight in one of the harbours on the north coast, were both blown up in the night, and that next day nothing could be seen but burned and shattered fragments.”

“That,” said O’Gorman, “is the polished and corrected version of the tale; but the original rumour amongst the slaves bears it out wonderfully, for I have taken much pains to trace it.”

“We are only just come in from the country,” said Singleton; “and I had not heard it, nor even now can I attach any importance to such a parody on the Kilkenny cats.”

“And yet,” resumed the General thoughtfully, “it is more than a little alarming—there’s my poor Darby, and all those poor Petrels, to whom I am so much indebted. And recollect, Singleton; but for the accidental meeting with the Brilliant, my wife and

children would still have been on board the Petrel, and must have shared her fate, for if there is any truth in the story, she must be the sufferer."

Singleton shuddered at the thought of such a fate for Norah and her mother; but endeavoured to satisfy his friend that it must be a mere idle rumour, as no report from such a distance could possibly have reached Cape Town.

But the Major's reasoning was so far from convincing the General, that it did not, after all, satisfy himself.

"Go, Charles," said Darcie, "speak to the servants and try by every possible means, to prevent this horrible story from reaching Anna and the girls. Excuse me, Singleton, I must pay immediate attention to this, for it will distract them, and ages may pass before the horrid tale can be either confirmed or

disproved. If you get any information upon the subject at head quarters, let me have it directly."

Nothing was now spoken of in Cape Town but the dreadful fate of the Petrel, the Baronet and his odd ways were as nothing in the balance.

Captain Timmins was suddenly aroused from his usual noon-day nap, by his hostess Mrs. Allclack.

"Good Heavens, my dear Captain," quoth the dame, swelling with the consciousness of having such an important event to announce, "here's the Petrel blown up and every soul on board of her perished, as sure as you lay there."

"What? what? God forbid! when, where, how, who says so?" exclaimed the Captain starting to his feet, in a state of great excitement, "when, where, how? I ask you? where's the man that says so?"

It is generally much easier to ask questions than to answer them, and the good lady was more than a little puzzled by the Captain's very natural questions, but her friend, Mrs. Secondchop, arrived to the rescue at that critical moment.

"I'll tell you how it was," she said: "the Petrel was laying quietly in port thinking no harm, when a horrid pirate stole in on a dark night, and boarded her, most of the officers and men were killed in their beds, but that dare-devil Herbert, finding all was lost, flew down to the powder room. Poor Captain Daunton, like a sensible man as he was, (for he always took his apartment at our house,) flew after him, dear good man! to stop him; but he was too late, and they were all blown up together. We have lost the best lodger we ever had, or ever shall have."

And the lady's eloquence subsided into a violent fit of sobbing.

“Are you all mad?” said Timmins, rubbing his eyes, “if they’d all been blown up, who could have brought this ridiculous story?”

“I don’t know anything about that,” replied his hostess, “but every body knows that the sad story is but too true,—” and she too began to sob.

“Confound these women! they are mad,” said the Captain gruffly—and seizing his hat and stick, he hastened off to the Baronet’s house, to hear what had really happened, for he was much alarmed, and doubted not that some bad news had arrived, in which his friends of the Petrel had been deeply concerned.

Sir Edwin sat in his usual quiet thoughtful way, with his papers before him, and was rather startled at the unusually abrupt entrance of Captain Timmins. When he raised his eyes, and beheld the agitated countenance of the honest seaman, who was generally so sedate and composed, he really became alarmed.

“Oh, Sir Edwin,” exclaimed his visitor, “what has happened? But I am sure you would not have been sitting so unconcerned if a tithe of what those foolish women told me had occurred?”

Chartres was thunderstruck,—what could have happened—his visitor had announced some terrible catastrophe, without the slightest clue to its nature.

“For Heaven’s sake, explain yourself: has anything occurred at the Mount?”

“Then you have really heard nothing?”

“Nothing I tell you, but do not torture me with suspense. What is all this?”

Timmins repeated the report of the Petrel having been blown up, and that all had perished.

Chartres paced up and down the hall in an agony of distress. He clapped his hands, and called: his head native servant entered, and upon inquiry he learned that his people

had also been informed of the report ; though, as their master never listened to the gossip of the place, they had not told him what they had heard.

It was quite clear to both the gentlemen, that the story of the women, in its full extent, was absolutely absurd ; but there was a painful apprehension that something very dreadful must have happened, to lay a foundation for such a tale. Ill news flies swiftly, and often mysteriously.

Chartres hastened to Mrs. Vaughan, who had also heard the prevailing rumour, and who proceeded in his carriage with him to the Mount.

“Most welcome,” said the General, coming out to meet them. “Singleton and O’Gorman are striving to trace this dreadful report to its source. I am on guard here to prevent its reaching Mrs. Darcie and the girls, though I

fear it is a hopeless task. I leave them to your kind care, my dear Mrs. Vaughan. They are in the north room, where Chartres' telescope is fixed, and where they are almost as constantly fixed too. Our chief danger lies in Emma, who hears everything, and sees everything: keep her with you, if you can. It is a shocking report, but I hope and trust, an unfounded one."

"Well, Chartres," he resumed, "this is a most painful affair, for although I put a good face upon it to Mrs. Vaughan. I am really much alarmed. You know my poor dear boy Darby?"

"I do, and a noble boy he is. You may well be proud of him. You and I owe these Petrels much. Daunton was a father to your children; and my friend Herbert is a glorious fellow. I have told you what I saw of him, and Mrs. Darcie's tale of his desperate attempt to save Darby after I left them, by which he so nearly sacrificed his own life, is

most affecting, I love that young fellow, and still hope, in despite of this rumour, that we shall yet see them all here safe and well."

Vain was all their care. A host of chattering slaves, and out-door hangers-on, were not to be silenced. A violent alarm from the room overhead conveyed the distressing intelligence, that the fatal rumour had struck home. Chatterbox, carriage was dispatched for medical assistance. Mrs. Darcie was alarmingly ill, Norah almost equally so. Their invaluable friend, Mrs. Vaughan, would not quit them, and proved, as she always did, a solace under the grief and alarm which she herself so largely shared.

CHAPTER VIII.

EVERY attempt to trace the strange rumour of the destruction of the Petrel, had failed. That it was general amongst the lowest of the natives, was certain, and that it had originated amongst them, was almost equally so ; but there, all trace of its origin was lost. It was recollected that reports of extraordinary events, said to have happened in distant parts of the African continent, had often reached Cape-Town, but they had generally proved groundless ; and even when otherwise, the facts had

invariably been so much exaggerated and distorted, as to be scarcely recognizable when the truth became known. It was probable that some action had taken place on the coast to the northward, and had thus been magnified in its long and circuitous journey to the Cape, into the destruction of two ships.

Those who had no personal interest in the Petrel's safety, were quite satisfied with this explanation, and thought little more about it ; but the Darcies and their immediate friends, though adopting the general view of the case in appearance, and striving hard to be satisfied in their hearts with it, still entertained painful misgivings. Things, however, resumed their usual course, which, as Mrs. Darcie was still unable to enter into society, was regular and quiet enough.

Every morning found poor Norah at the telescope, at daylight ; but nothing presented

itself to reward her perseverance, until about a week after this cruel rumour had arisen, when O'Gorman came home to breakfast, with a statement, that a ship of war had been officially reported to be on the coast, making for the Bay, though not yet in sight from the town, but that she must soon come in view round the Point. This was not a very usual circumstance, and the Flag Lieutenant had told him that the Petrel was the only ship then expected.

The Table Mountain was covered with a dense cloud, masses of which were rolling over the edge of the precipice; and disappearing amongst its ravines, whilst a still, close, oppressive air in the Town, announced an approaching south-easter, that plague of Cape Town, which, whilst its hot oppressive gusts are in themselves extremely depressing and debilitating, bear with them, moreover, thick clouds of

dust, the particles of which are so minute, and driven with such violence, that they penetrate everywhere. Nothing escapes them : vegetation shrivels under the infliction, and when violent, they effectually seal up the port. Many a baffled ship, which has fancied itself within reach of its long-coveted anchorage, is frequently doomed to beat about at sea for two or three days, whilst anxious families or friends on shore are tantalized daily with a distant view of the vessel, often uncertain whether the storm-tossed barque is, or is not, the ship they hoped for. Only those indeed who know Cape Town well, can comprehend all the miseries of a heavy south-easter. It had, however, not yet begun, and there was even a chance that the vessel seen might reach the anchorage before it broke forth.

Captain Timmins was sent for, as a seaman's eye can distinguish one vessel from another at

a great distance. The captain had taken his envied post at the glass, and the little party was grouped near him : all was painful anxiety.

“ There ! she shows round the Point,” said Norah, fixing her bright eyes intently upon the Captain.—

“ A man-of-war certainly,” were the first words of the oracle.

“ A brig,” he resumed.

Mrs. Darcie exchanged a hopeful glance with her daughter ; Emma saw this, and unable to restrain her joy, she danced round the room clapping her hands.

“ ’Tis Darby,—’tis Darby,—’tis Herbert,—’tis all of them !” she exclaimed. But a slight remonstrance silenced her.

There were symptoms of doubt and hesitation upon the Captain’s countenance, as he examined the hull and canvas of the stranger, which terrified Norah.

“Do you not think that it must be our friends?” she asked in a low tremulous voice.

But there was no reply.

“Surely, my good friend,” said Chartres, who, though he could control his own impatience, could no longer endure to look upon the fearful anxiety of Mrs. Darcie and her daughter, “surely you should know the Petrel now that her whole broadside is open to you, as she stands across the entrance of the bay, though still far off?”

“Why?” replied the Captain, who was struggling hard to suppress something very like a conviction that it was not the Petrel. “It is very like her, but—”

“But what? my dear friend,” said Sir Edwin, impatiently, “do speak out.”

And could Captain Timmins have seen, as Chartres did, the painfully agitated countenances behind him, he would not have been surprised at his friend’s pettishness.

“I don’t like the colour of her canvas,” said the Captain to himself, but audibly, “and then, she has a red ribband,—the Petrel white,” he muttered discontentedly, “but that’s an alteration easily made.”

His anxious auditors caught eagerly at these mysterious ejaculations, but derived little comfort from them.

“And yet,” he resumed, “never were two vessels more alike. But then she has a gaff upon her foremast though: that’s something quite new.” He shook his head despondingly. “Her masts have not the rake of the Petrel’s, no, no—she is a stranger!”

Their hopes had gradually fallen, under the evident hesitation of the Captain, as the unwelcome truth had forced itself upon him, until the decision had absolutely been a relief to them.

Norah caught her mother’s hand, and

pressed it fondly to her lips. What an inestimable treasure was the sympathy, the sanction of that mother now ! Captain Timmins was closely questioned, as to distances, and probable periods of the Petrel's homeward voyage from the Mozambique ; and it was some consolation to learn from such authority, that her arrival hitherto could hardly have been expected, and consequently, that there was as yet no ground for alarm arising from lapse of time.

“ As for the Petrel's being blown up by a pirate,” said the warm-hearted seaman, indignantly, “ a ship manned and officered as she is : I don't believe it possible ! ”

“ I agree with you,” said Chartres, “ and what's much more to the purpose, the naval officers here laugh the story to scorn. Dauntton and Herbert, they say, are not men likely to throw away their ship that way.”

All this was to a certain extent consolatory, but still that dreadful rumour hung like a blight upon the Darcies and their more immediate friends.

Poor Mrs. Darcie, amidst all her afflictions, felt heavily that one circumstance or other had from day to day unavoidably deferred the important communication she was so desirous to make to her husband. It had required preparations and explanations, to which she hardly yet felt herself equal.

Norah awaited the result of this announcement of her engagement with a trepidation almost as painful as her alarm about the Petrel. As yet, whenever an opportunity had offered of introducing the subject, Mrs. Darcie's strength and resolution had utterly failed her. Now that she felt her fears for the Petrel somewhat abated, in deference to the confidence expressed by all who were competent

to judge, the secondary cause of anxiety assumed, as usual in such cases, the foremost place. She saw too, that the General, though he never mentioned the subject, no longer entertained much expectation that Chartres would proffer his hand and fortune to Norah, much as he admired and esteemed her.

Time pressed, for if ever the Petrel was to return, it must be soon, and might be any day. Darcie too, softened by his apprehension for his son, whose gallant conduct had made him doubly dear to the old soldier, had participated in the sufferings of his wife and daughter; and felt severely for them, though he said little about it.

The brig which had arrived was from England, but the arrival or departure of a sloop-of-war was an affair of little moment, unless she should have brought important news, which was not the case now.

The following afternoon was fine, the south-easter had blown itself out, and a gentle breeze from the sea had succeeded, converting a scorching, parching atmosphere, compounded of dust, haze, and glare, into the loveliest climate it is possible to imagine, with all the benefit of contrast. Mrs. Vaughan had called for the girls to give them the full benefit of the pleasant change in a drive to Green Point.

"Thank God, Anna," said the General, entering the telescope room, where they now usually sat, "that detestable south-easter is gone. I have just seen the girls off with Mrs. Vaughan, and if you could have been persuaded to go, I would have mounted my horse, and taken a gallop too; but we can breathe freely even here now."

Mrs. Darcie reached forth her hand, her eyes filled with tears. It was a trying moment: she had a painful duty to perform, but

delay only made it more distressing. He saw, but naturally mistook the cause of her dejection and embarrassment.

“Keep up your spirits, Anna,” he said, affectionately; “I have been talking with the Admiral, and he assures me he feels no alarm about the safety of our dear boy’s ship, and that he could hardly have expected her here yet. The brig that arrived yesterday is on her way to India. He tells me that there is a ship coming out to relieve the Petrel, as she is ordered to England, and desired me to consult you about Darby, who can go home, or remain in the flag-ship here, whichever you may prefer.”

“The Admiral is very kind,” replied Mrs. Darcie, “and, Charles, from all I have heard, I am not now quite so much alarmed about the Petrel, but I have too much at stake, you know, to be altogether reasonable upon this subject.”

She was summoning resolution for the painful disclosure. She had never concealed anything important from her husband, and never by word or deed thwarted his known wishes in his plans and views for his children.

He looked earnestly at her. "Anna," he said, "your countenance does not say much for your revived hopes. It has more than once struck me that there was some crushing weight upon your mind, even before this report reached us; but weak and ill as you were, after all you had undergone, I could not urge you upon the subject. If you now feel better, pray tell me what it is so grieves you, and I may be able to give you consolation."

"I will, I will!" she said hurriedly; "my heart has been breaking to tell you all, but I have not had strength for the task."

The General drew his chair close to the couch on which Mrs. Darcie was seated, as if at once to support her, and to save as much as

possible the exertion of her voice. His countenance betrayed a painful degree of anxiety, but his manner was kind and affectionate.

“Charles,” she said, assured by this circumstance, “it has been impossible to describe, even to you, any material portion of the horrors to which I have been exposed, or the terrors I experienced for our poor dear girls, during our late voyage; and you were not there, Charles, to protect us. I was amongst strangers; but what do we not owe to those strangers? Our first alarms, the sight of the pirate, the attack and defence of the Thames, with our retreat after dark to that wild desolate shore, have been related to you, and you can imagine what your wife must have felt, when her innocent children were exposed to horrors compared with which death would have been a blessing.”

The General pressed his hand to his brow, as if stunned by the picture.

“We had scarcely escaped from these scenes,” resumed Mrs. Darcie, “and been placed in seeming safety, when I was again startled by fire-arms, and found the cavern, to which we had retreated, in the hands of the pirates. Oh! Charles, can I give you any idea of my feelings at that moment?”

The General turned pale, and pressed her hand tenderly.

“Our eyes turned to heaven, for we had lost all hope of earthly aid, though it was, as you know, at hand. One ruffian’s knife was already raised against me, another threatened our Norah, when we heard the cry of the Petrels; and Mr. Herbert, at so much risk to himself, effected our rescue.”

“He is certainly a gallant fellow,” said Darcie, much moved.

“And more than that, Charles,” pursued Mrs. Darcie, taking courage at this encomium,

“I will not conceal from you that from that moment I became aware that he was deeply attached to our sweet girl.”

Darcie gave a slight start.

“Of course, she could not but be prepossessed in his favour,” pursued Mrs. Darcie, not observing his altered look, “and he had a great claim on her gratitude. Time wore on, and in our new position on board the *Petrel*, they were unavoidably much together. Then Herbert, after all this, devoted himself so heroically to save Darby, nearly losing his own life in the attempt. What girl’s heart could withstand such conduct, in one so profoundly attached to her? What mother, Charles, under such circumstances, could refuse to sanction his suit?”

Her voice faltered; she was obliged to pause.

“Charles,” she faintly resumed, “I have

never concealed a thought of my heart from you; but—”

The exertion, however, had been too great, the effort too long sustained ; she swooned.

Darcie lost all recollection of the painful fact, so suddenly and movingly revealed to him, forgot for the moment the bitter, bitter truth, that his daughter, the pride of his heart, had become irrevocably attached to a poor subaltern officer, and thought only of the inanimate object before him, the faithful affectionate wife, and inestimable mother of his children, the most unselfish of human beings. He called loudly for aid, nor did he quit the spot till the amiable sufferer had been fully restored to consciousness. He then bent over her couch, and pressed her hand fondly.

“My Anna,” he whispered, “you have been severely, cruelly tried. This is a heavy blow, I will not deny it, but you, my love, are blame-

less. Let nothing more be said. Kiss my poor child for me, though I cannot say she has acted as I would have desired.”

He left the room, sprang upon his horse, and galloped off. He cared not whether the lovely, the talented, the high-minded girl, of whose elevation he had so fondly, proudly dreamed, were now to toil through life in poverty and in obscurity, so deeply was his proud, ambitious spirit wounded,—and offended!

CHAPTER IX.

The threatening appearance of the weather, when the Petrel quitted Pemba, was rendered important by the debilitated state of the crew, amongst whom the progress of disease could scarcely be said to be checked, though the convalescent and the comparatively healthy portion of the men were evidently benefited by the wholesome and nutritious diet which had been with so much difficulty procured for them.

The prevailing wind of the approaching

Monsoon was directly in their favour, but the first thousand miles of their passage abounded in scattered Islands and reefs, whilst in thick foggy weather, such as now began to prevail, it was impossible even by day to see the land, till you were dangerously near it, and to ascertain the position of the ship by celestial observation was also impossible, as the sun was constantly obscured, whilst the current generally setting strong to the southward was apt to be very much influenced both in strength and direction by the wind, and other local influences. The mixture of heavy squalls and dead calms was perplexing, for it was almost impossible to ascertain the distance made good by the usual method of dead reckoning, and consequently the ship's position could only be guessed at, frequently to the extent of a hundred miles.

Herbert, thus surrounded by difficulties, felt

the full weight of a first command, and missed the support of poor Daunton, whose great experience and sound judgment had always been conspicuous in emergencies.

The chart was spread out upon the cabin table.

“Marliner,” said Herbert, “if we can only get sun enough for a meridian or a double altitude occasionally, we may contrive to get a fresh departure now and then, by hauling in for the land in our parallel, as, luckily for us, our position will be much more a question of latitude than longitude.”

“Yes, sir,” replied the Master, “that is an important advantage, but if for any length of time we should see neither sun nor land, it will be desperate work running through this channel night and day, before a heavy gale, without seeing your own jibboom-end, with such rocks and reefs in our direct course.”

“And yet there is no remedy, Marliner ; for should we attempt to lie-to amongst such currents, we shall soon be unable even to guess our position. Our only chance is to steer a straight course through the Channel, upon the safest line we can strike, hoping for an observation, or a fresh departure now and then.”

“There’s no other plan for it,” said Marliner. “Lead lines and other usual precautions will be useless here : so we must screw up our nerves and take our chance.”

“Well, pilot,” said Herbert to Bombay Jack, who had now obeyed his summons, “I suppose this baffling weather, which keeps our poor fellows continually making and shortening sail, night and day, and always wet, is the usual forerunner of the monsoon.”

“Yes, sare—we hab him bery soon now ; plenty blow, too much plenty rain, come now.”

“We may hope I suppose to see the sun, or to make the land occasionally for a fresh departure.”

“Not mush, sir; blow—rain—fog, him make de monsoon,” said the pilot, shaking his head.

“I suppose if we should get sight of the land, you would always know it?”

Bombay Jack nodded his head affirmatively.

“We think we see the looming of the land again, sir,” reported the officer of the watch.

“Go up, pilot, see what it is, and set it carefully.”

“There is one great point gained by having this man, Marliner. He is trustworthy, and an occasional glimpse of the land through the fog, which would only bewilder us who do not know the coast, would be, from his local knowledge, invaluable to us.”

The land was seen, a departure from it taken, and for a few hours, the wind was fair, and steady, but the rain incessant.

Danvers entered the cabin ; he was fatigued and out of spirits.

“I have five new cases this morning,” he said, “and I fear two of my worst cases will not outlive the night. Still, amongst the greater part of the sufferers, there is an abatement in the violence of the symptoms, and the effect of an improved diet is astonishing upon some of the younger men and the convalescents.”

“We have a difficult task before us, Danvers. I too am unwell, but I must not and will not give way to it. Do what you can to patch me up for present use, for I must be up night and day—at any rate, till we get the old ship into an open sea.”

Days and nights passed away with these teasing, tantalizing calms and squalls, no land

could be seen, nor did the sun show his face; rain, or fog, or both prevailed without intermission. The constant fatigue and wet continued to increase the number of the sick, and five men had died. Danvers, overworked, saw with deep regret that Herbert was becoming daily more unwell, and more incompetent to the arduous duties, and the painful responsibilities which had fallen upon him, but his spirit quailed not. He seemed to require neither food nor rest; and his example gave life and spirit to many who, like himself, struggled with disease and disdained to succumb.

Again with Marliner and the pilot he pored over the chart. Their position within fifty miles it had become impossible even to guess, yet they must be fast approaching the most dangerous part of their run.

“How far do you consider us to be to the

northward of Cape Ambro, the north end of Madagascar, Pilot?" said Herbert, "Mr. Marliner and I have both worked it, but our opinions upon this important point vary considerably."

"No can say for sure, sare, him current differ too much ebery day, but I tink bout hundred miles north of Cape Ambro now."

"That is just half way between Mr. Marliner's reckoning and mine. You are sure you have made large allowance for the current, Jack?"

"O yes, plenty, sare: no can be more farder south."

"Well," resumed Herbert, after a thoughtful pause, "we are agreed, I believe, that the ship is now a hundred miles north of Madagascar: there is a strong double-reefed topsail breeze; and though it is very thick, and noon has gone by without a sight of the sun, what think

you of taking advantage of the comparatively settled state of the wind, to haul our wind to the eastward, and keeping her a point free under all she'll carry, pushing to the eastward of Madagascar altogether. There we shall find an open channel, a hundred leagues wide, free from all danger."

"The same thought has occurred to me, but I could not satisfy myself that we might not be already so far to the southward as to make our weathering the island doubtful, in this thick weather," said Marliner, "and yet I think that impossible."

Again every element of calculation was carefully worked out, and very large allowance made for the current, and then fifty miles allowed for possible error.

"You see," observed Herbert, "that should we be even fifty, sixty, or seventy miles to the southward of our presumed position, we shall still weather all danger."

Marliner and the pilot acquiesced in this view; and the Petrel, a point free, under double-reefed topsails and courses, staggered through a considerable sea about nine knots an hour.

About four in the afternoon, Herbert and Marliner were congratulating themselves upon the unusual steadiness of the breeze, and agreeing that at the rate they were going, they would be to the eastward of Madagascar altogether before dark.

"I will, however," said Herbert, "run the ship a hundred miles farther to the eastward, to make assurance doubly sure, before I bear up to the southward."

"How's this?" said Marliner to the pilot, "we are all at once in smooth water."

"Hands up about ship," exclaimed Herbert.

The difference so suddenly felt in the motion of the ship, had alarmed all below, and they flew to their stations.

“Ready, ho! ready! said Herbert.

“Give her the helm, slowly,” he said, “ease off the jibsheet,” she flew up in the wind; the pilot rushed to the jibboom-end, Marliner to the lead in the chains. “Tacks and sheets up mainsail,” cried Herbert. “Man that maintop bowline well. Maintopsail haul.”

“I see him, de land, I know him,” shouted Bombay Jack.

“Seventeen fathoms,” said Mr. Marliner from the chains.

“Of all haul,” shouted Herbert: “right the helm, Oakum.”

“She’s not lost her way altogether,” said the master from the chains: “thirteen fathoms and a half with a hard rocky bottom.”

The Petrel shot ahead fast on the star-board tack, and deepened her water quickly.”

“I see him land, I know him,” said the pilot, once more coming aft, in a state of

considerable agitation. "I almost touch him dere in de jibboom, him five leagues south from Cape Ambro, no could believe my eyes, how debbil ship come here no can tell. O sare, what scape we hab: bery bad coast, bery bad peoples here, sare."

"Are you certain you know that land, from a mere glimpse of it through the fog? Remember, pilot," added Herbert, gravely, "it is a question of life or death."

"Quite sure, sare," replied Bombay Jack firmly, "dis de only point on dis coast, where de ship could stand into smooth water widout to be on de rocks; lost wid ebery body."

"God be merciful to us," said Herbert looking at the chart. "See, Anstey, there is but one projecting point, which could break off the sea from a ship standing in: every where else rugged reefs. Had we hit any other spot but this, even by day, in such a fog, none of us would have lived to tell the tale."

“What a sea,” replied Anstey, “where in despite of all possible precaution and care, a ship may be a hundred and fifty miles out of her reckoning in a few days, with rocks and shoals in every direction.”

“But, pilot,” resumed Herbert, who was still examining the chart, “here are three small islets laid down off this point, which must be outside of us yet, and very near us. Shall we not strike them in standing off?”

“I know dem well, all three, sare, dem most different one from de oder, him bery small, bery high, deep water close to, spose see dem bery close, can pass eider side. I wish see one, den take fresh 'parture from he.”

A strict look-out was kept with the men in their stations, ready for any sudden evolution.

“Something looming close on the weather bow, sir,” reported Tandy from the fore-yard.

“I see him, sare, keep the ship more away.”

“Starboard,” said Herbert, “ease off the boom sheet, trice up the tack of the mainsail, hands to the weather braces.”

They glided rapidly past a high rocky islet, within a cable’s length of its southern shore, the sea breaking at each end of it. For a moment it was so close as to take the wind out of their sails, but the ship heeled suddenly over again, as the breeze caught her, and they bore up for a channel course, under the direction of Bombay Jack.

“Dat, captain, de soutmost of de tree: I know he well. All clear now, captain.”

They had now, after an awfully narrow escape from being wrecked on the most dangerous and most barbarous part of the western coast of Madagascar, passed the chief dangers of the passage.

The wind soon increased to a heavy gale, but it blew more steadily. They had a fresh

departure which they could depend upon, and although more than ever blinded by rain and fog, they would be for some time in comparative safety, which was a great relief to those upon whom the chief responsibility of navigating the ship rested.

Herbert got some sleep which he greatly needed, but the morning brought no farther alleviation to his anxieties; for they were now approaching new dangers, and they could only guess their distance from them, so thick was the fog, and so uncertain had they found the currents; yet were they, of necessity, flying before a heavy gale in a strangely agitated sea, towards rocks and reefs to strike upon which would be instantaneous destruction.

“We had a narrow escape yesterday,” observed Danvers, when they had discussed the hospital report of the day, which was by no means satisfactory.

“Yes,” said Herbert, “but heaven only knows whether we can yet say we have escaped. We have to run the gauntlet yet for some hundred miles through scattered rocks and shoals, and blindfold too. It is awful, Danvers, to feel so many lives depending upon every step one takes, when, God knows, we have no solid grounds upon which to base an opinion. Our escape yesterday was little less than miraculous, for in despite of every care and caution, we were more than a hundred miles out of our reckoning. Had we fallen in with that coast, only half a mile above or below that precise point, we must have perished to a man.”

“I am glad to see you better to-day,” observed the doctor.

“Yes, I have had some sleep. Anstey, Marliner, and Yarker, hold out wonderfully: every one around me is staunch, and our

pilot's knowledge of the land is surprising. These ignorant men, trusting wholly to their local knowledge, attain extraordinary accuracy."

"They say that two days, run with this gale will carry us through now," observed Danvers.

"Even so," said Herbert; "when I see those boys with their fresh and cheerful faces, I almost envy them. They know not the burden of responsibility, and when off duty sleep as soundly as when their mothers rocked the cradle for them."

On the second night after this, they were still running before the same impetuous gale, and must have passed through dangers unnumbered in their headlong course. One only obstacle lay yet in their immediate route. It might be close before them or fifty miles off, but wherever it was, it was full of appalling danger. Amidst such a tumult of winds and

waves the breaking even of a heavy surf upon a reef would not be distinguished in time to warn them. Mist enveloped them, torrents of rain blinded them—they must take their chance.

Herbert well knew that this was the crisis of their fate, and, too much exhausted to be able to stand up, was leaning against one of the quarter-deck guns in anxious meditation. His wearied spirit sought for solace, in turning to the subject ever nearest his heart. He thought of his last walk with Norah, as they listened to the Brilliant's band, the night before they parted.

It was the self-same deck which he now trod, but how different was all around him! Not more different was the wild roaring of the storm, to that soft harmony which had charmed the ear, than was every other accessory of the present scene, to all the remembrances of that sweet hour.

“How thankful I am,” he murmured, “that they were taken from us, though then, in my selfish short-sighted folly, I would have kept them here. It is terrible to think of what they must have suffered had not Providence saved them from it. Surely, after this, I ought to be enabled under every dispensation to say, God’s will be done!”

A cry of horror from the fore-castle aroused him.

The ship took a tremendous lurch to star-board. A deep gulf only intervened between the Petrel and a huge dark mass, rendered visible by white glittering sparkling foam, which covered it to a considerable height. As her broadside sank in the yawning waters, it appeared as if her lower yards, now nearly vertical, must touch the rock, and to touch it was to perish. The roar of the mighty wave, as it broke upon the rocks was heard above

the storm, and its recoil burst instantaneously over the ship, with a stroke under which her whole frame quivered. She was thrown over with a fearful roll in the opposite direction, and her decks were covered with foam dashed from the rocks. A hand's breadth nearer would have been their destruction.

"Steady!" cried Herbert, holding on, as the rushing waters rolled over him.

"Steady it is," replied the manly voice of Marliner, as at the critical moment he seized the helm, and clung to it with desperate energy, assisted by Jack Oakum. And they held her on her course!

The danger was passed, and as the hatches had been battened down, the vast body of water which had filled her waist, not able to pass below, rushed from her ports and scuppers, relieving the half drowned crew, many of whom had been beaten down by its force; the star-

board-quarter boat hung in fragments from the davits.

“All right now, Captain, sare,” said Bombay Jack, who, whilst recovering his breath from the shock, shook himself like a great Newfoundland dog.

“I look for dat rock,” he resumed, “too mush dark, too mush rain—I know he well. Go sleep, Captain, when you please; no more rock, noting now; I show you Baziaruti Island to-morrow, spoze can see at all.”

They had no longer anything to contend with, but the usual evils of a heavy gale and a high-breaking sea. They made the Baziaruti Islands and the coast, for as they emerged from the channel, it became comparatively clear.

But no sooner had the powerful excitements of that dangerous passage ceased, than Herbert sank under the insidious disease with which he

had so long struggled. His situation became alarming, and for some days Danvers almost despaired of him; but at last youth, and a robust constitution triumphed, though he was left in a deplorable state of debility. Danvers had learned, during the paroxysms of fever, that the fear of not finding the Darcies at the Cape weighed heavily upon his mind, and Darby was directed to argue that this fear was vain; but still it was a fearful thought to him. At length they passed the Cape, and approached the entrance of Table Bay. Herbert was convalescent, but reduced to the last stage of helpless exhaustion.

CHAPTER X.

SIR Edwin had just seated himself on the following morning at breakfast, in the large cool half-darkened hall, when he was agreeably surprised by the entrance of Rashton.

“Welcome, my old friend,” he said, “I am glad to find that you can tear yourself from the temptations of Stellembosh. I began to think you would allow me to leave the colony without seeing you.”

“Not much danger of that,” replied Rashton, “if all reports I hear are true; but the fact is

that the Captain of the Star, now here on her way to India, is a cousin of mine, and hearing I was at the Cape, sent off an express to Stellembosh to offer me a passage to Bombay. In reply I invited him to meet me here this morning at breakfast, and to take up his abode with us for the few days he and I shall remain here. Cool, was n't it, Chartres?"

"The Captain shall be welcome as yourself, Rashton. I only wish we may persuade him to stay a little longer than you appear to expect."

Chartres' head-servant heard this conversation, and made the necessary arrangements forthwith, not only with respect to the breakfast, but as to the accommodation of the guests. Chartres was hospitable, was a liberal, indulgent master, and hated trouble.

"So I find, then," resumed Chartres, "that this horrid report has reached you also. We

do not believe it here, but, of course, I shall remain till the truth is known ; for although, as I said before, I disbelieve it altogether, I confess that it disturbs me, and worries me very much."

Rashton raised his eyes, and fixed them upon his friend with a very strange expression ; for although he was a remarkably cool and unimaginative sort of man, he certainly for the moment doubted his friend's sanity. The report to which he had alluded, and indeed the only one he had heard, was that relative to Chartres' immediate marriage with Norah Darcie, to which he had naturally enough, after all he had seen of Chartres' devotion, readily given implicit belief. What could Sir Edwin, then, mean by calling it a horrid report, —stating his disbelief of it, and, above all, his determination to remain at the Cape till the truth should be known?

Rashton sat staring at his friend, in what Jonathan so expressively calls “a dead fix,” whilst Chartres was sipping his coffee with great composure, and flirting with a remarkably fine bunch of muscadel grapes. Luckily the entrance of Captain Mudie of the *Star* disturbed Rashton’s reverie. Warm greetings and introductions over, a vigorous attack commenced upon a first-rate Cape breakfast, in itself no despicable affair; but when, as in this case, reinforced with a few choice Indian dishes, nowhere to be excelled. This soon fully occupied their attention. There was clearly no misunderstanding, nor difference of opinion upon this subject. The Captain, being a new comer, took a magnificent looking peach; but finding it as hard as a raw potato, fell back upon the grapes and figs, which were exquisite.

Nothing is more instantaneously efficacious in promoting cordiality than a super-excellent

breakfast,—a good dinner is of proverbial renown in this respect,—but a dinner is a formal elaborate sort of thing, and requires hours to produce its full effect. The breakfast is magical, and in one short half-hour it would have been difficult to say which of our two Anglo-Indians was the cousin of the frank cheerful sailor, or which of the three was most completely at home. But Chartres had a way of making his guests feel themselves at home, which was peculiar to him. There was no art in it, it was in the nature of the man, and was not to be resisted.

Chartres, soon after breakfast, retired to his own room.

“Rashton,” he said, offering his hand to the Captain, “will show you your apartment and tell you the ways of the house. An excellent horse is at your service, and I shall hope to see you at five o’clock, unless you should meet

with a pleasanter engagement, which is far from being improbable, as this is but a bachelor's house. The principal advantage of it is, that you can come and go at pleasure; Rash-ton and you will have much to talk about after a separation of many years."

Seated in his own room, with his letters and papers before him, Chartres sank into a sort of reverie; he felt no inclination to attend to business—he seldom did now.

Circumstances required his presence in England, and Captain Timmins's detention had been once more extended. He had no possible plea for remaining at the Cape, and yet he had not the resolution to decide. This he, in some degree, accounted for to himself, by his anxiety to hear of the Petrel before he left the Cape; other people attributed his stay to a very different cause, for his agreement for a passage in the Sercy was still a secret, and even Cap-

tain Timmins, though the passage was taken and paid for, was still in doubt whether the Baronet would really go with him.

Rashton, having established his friend, the Captain, in his new quarters, and learned that they would proceed on the third day, came to acquaint Chartres with his arrangements.

“I should like to have stayed a few days longer with you,” he said, “but I am surprised to find that the rumour I alluded to should have been so offensive to you; but as it came to me at Stellemboosh, from a sister of Timmins’s landlady here, I could not doubt it.”

It was now Chartres’ turn to be puzzled.

“How could such a report be otherwise than most painful to you, as well as to me?” he said.

“Of course,” replied Rashton, “I could only be interested in the matter on your account. To me personally, especially as you do not

return to India, it could be of little consequence."

Chartres was now completely mystified.

"Why? Surely, my dear friend, with all our obligations to our friends in the *Petrel*, this unhappy rumour must have been as painful to you as it was to me."

"*Petrel*?" said his bewildered friend, "What can the *Petrel* have to do with a report that you were going to be married?"

This plain question brought the Baronet at once upon his legs, and opened his understanding to certain inconsistencies in his late proceedings, respecting which, as he had resolutely closed his own eyes, he had flattered himself that every one else had been equally unobservant. A full explanation followed, and when Captain Timmins came to call soon after, he was agreeably surprised to find the Baronet quite ready to discuss the probable time of the departure

of the Sercy, with full permission to speak of Sir Edwin's having taken his passage in her.

Once more left to himself, one single subject took possession of his thoughts. It had really then been commonly reported that he was engaged to marry Norah Darcie, and when he considered how exclusively he had attached himself to the Darcies; and how much his share in rescuing them from the pirates had been talked of and exaggerated, with the strong marks of gratitude and friendship lavished upon him by his friends at the Mount, adding thereto his long hesitation about proceeding to England, where the possession of a large hereditary fortune awaited him, and whither his medical attendants were known to have urged him to go; he felt, now that he had been awakened from his delusive persuasion, that the quiet seclusion of his mode of living as an invalid, would not preserve him from the musquito-

like annoyance of idle gossips. He felt indeed most painfully that through his wavering and indecisive conduct the name of that fair and innocent girl had been to a certain degree compromised. His immediate determination therefore was to wait upon the General, to lay his whole heart open to him, and if, as he felt assured, he was not fortunate enough to be qualified to render the married state happy to so young and so lovely a creature, it would be some consolation to him, since the busy world had taken up the subject, that it should be generally known that the difficulty had arisen on the lady's side, which was indeed the true state of the case; for had Chartres seen any ground to hope that he had won Norah's affection, he would long since have sought her hand. His unexpected acquisition of fortune had in no degree raised his hopes of success, for he understood Norah too well to imagine that his

title or his wealth would influence her upon such a point.

“No!” he said to himself, “my age, my broken health, my valetudinarian habits, my listless indifference to society, must certainly be against me. How could I constitute the happiness of one so young and joyous,—and could I endure to see her unhappy? No, no, my course is clear!”

He ordered his carriage to be ready in half an hour.

At the Mount, meanwhile, the General and Mrs. Darcie had come to a clear understanding. Norah had been informed by her mother, that the General, however mortified that his daughter should have involved herself in an engagement, which he feared would consign her to anxiety and hope deferred for years; as marrying a poor man, she herself having no fortune, was quite out of the question, he did

still acquit her entirely of being in fault in this matter. She should be as dear to him as ever, and he would consent to her marriage with Herbert, for whom he entertained a high regard, whenever they could make up an income which would under any circumstances secure them a moderate competence, suited to their station in life. And now, but for the cloud that still hung over the Petrel's fate, Norah would have been perfectly happy. That her attachment to Herbert should be sanctioned and approved by her father, was a thing she had scarcely dared to hope for. She had no immediate wish to be married; but to enjoy Herbert's society openly and freely, and be permitted to look upon him as her future husband, was the dearest ambition of her heart.

Mrs. Darcie was made the medium of communication upon the subject; and the father

and the daughter were thus saved from all embarrassment. When the General soon after entered the room, Norah rushed forward, and kneeling before him, pressed his hand to her lips. He raised her up and embraced her fondly, and she retired shedding tears of joy.

Susan announced that Sir Edwin Chartres was in the General's room.

"I had rather not see him to-day, Charles, and do not ask him to dinner. Norah and I would fain be without company; even Chartres would be too much to-day."

"Well, my good friend," said the General, entering, "I have not seen you these two days. So I hear your friend Rashton goes on to India in the Star; thank Heaven you are not obliged to go!"

"I am deeply grateful for it," replied Chartres, "for the climate disagreed fearfully

with me, and has made me the wreck I am ; or I should not have disliked the country : and the duties of our service are such as a philanthropist may often find gratification in. But I have come, my dear General, to solicit your attention to a matter of infinite importance to me."

The General took a seat near him.

" I will be frank and concise, my dear General. That I have long admired your daughter can scarcely be doubted by any one who knows what opportunities I have enjoyed of seeing the fine qualities of her mind, called forth under long and severe trials. Youth and beauty, and amiability are powerful attractions, and they are all hers in an eminent degree. Could I have flattered myself, that Miss Darcie would, or could have attached herself to one so much older than herself, with broken health and spirits, I should long since

have sought her hand; but, with all her frank and friendly deportment towards me, I could never discover, nor had I any right to expect, that I could be happy enough to engage her affections. This painful conviction, with a natural unwillingness to resign all hope of possessing so inestimable a treasure, acting upon an indolent and indecisive temperament, has long kept me in a painful state of suspense. I have now, my dear sir, unburthened my heart freely to you: permit me to add, that, if Miss Darcie would condescend to become Lady Chartres, I should be the happiest of men. Marriage settlements, family jewels, &c., are matters of course, and would have no weight with her, though such things may be, and indeed ought to be proffered. Important duties summon me to England; but, with all my too-well-grounded fears that such happiness is not in reserve for me, I could not

endure the thought of renouncing all hope, till I had laid my pretensions at her feet through your friendly medium. The happiness of my future life is at stake; and it is not very unusual for women of superior minds to overlook disparities like those which make my pretensions presumptuous, even in my own eyes; and I shall await the result of this interview with all the thrilling interest, which is natural to a man who feels that, as this attachment is the first, so also will it be the last of his life."

He paused, overcome by the painful effort he had made to give utterance to this almost hopeless declaration, whilst the General, nearly as much affected by the varied emotions which had arisen in his mind during this most unexpected scene, rose and walked a few turns up and down the room to attain composure.

"My dear Sir Edwin," he said, "we are all highly honoured by your generous proposal;

Norah entertains, as we all do, the highest regard for you. The little personal inequalities, which you so far over-rate, would weigh little with her, as she sees in you a man whose noble qualities would ensure the happiness of any wife who was worthy of you. To Mrs. Darcie and to me such an alliance would have been most acceptable. I need not tell you how truly we appreciate you; but I have reason to believe that my daughter has formed an attachment rather romantic than wise, for a youth to whom, as to yourself, we are under the greatest obligations. I will, therefore, with your permission, having candidly stated this unlucky fact to you as a proof of confidence, merely acquaint Mrs. Darcie with the honour you have conferred upon our dear girl, without mentioning it in any other quarter; and I trust, my dear Sir Edwin, that you will still honour us with your friendship."

Honourable men, by which we mean men who never by word or deed, swerve from the straight path, never permit interested or selfish feelings to betray them into an act that will not bear daylight; men who never, upon any pretext whatever, tamper with truth, ever possess, with respect to each other, a sort of freemasonry, bright and unclouded to a degree, which mere grovelling natures do not and cannot comprehend. The General and Sir Edwin Chartres separated with increased regard for each other.

But the Baronet's object was not fully attained until it should be pretty generally understood that the offer of his hand and fortune had been respectfully, but decidedly declined. To accomplish this quietly and effectually, he took, as was his custom, the plainest and simplest mode of action.

Whilst sitting after dinner with Rashton,

Timmins, and his newly arrived guest, he availed himself of a pause in the conversation.

“You and I, Rashton,” he said, “were puzzling each other, when our friend here joined us at breakfast; you were alluding to a rumour of my marriage which had never reached me, whilst I was speaking of a report to which you were a stranger. I have not, till now, found an opportunity of explaining all this; I, of course, spoke of the rumoured loss of the Petrel, you of a report that I was about to marry a young lady of our acquaintance here. There was so far a foundation for this, that I admired her extremely, and had conceived so high an³ opinion of her, that I should have been but too happy, had the rumour been true; but I am not the happy man. I can only say it was not my fault; I have taken my passage for England with our old friend, Cap-

tain Timmins, in the Sercy, but am very desirous that the Petrel should arrive before we sail. I wish, Captain Mudie, you could stay a week or ten days longer, and then we might all start together."

Norah Darcie, relieved from all apprehension of her father's displeasure, would now have been quite happy, but for her anxiety for Herbert's safety and Darby's. It was announced that Sir Edwin would sail in the Sercy the following week, and he appeared to be fully occupied with his preparations, for little was seen of him at the Mount.

Thus things went on till the Star sailed on the appointed day. The wind was light, and late in the afternoon she was still in the entrance of Table Bay, and the ladies with O'Gorman were watching her proceedings through the telescope.

"Do come here!" said Norah to her cousin

the Aide-de-Camp, "what can the Star be showing all those flags for?"

O'Gorman obeyed the summons, and instantly exclaimed,

"She has hoisted the Union Jack over three flags,—she sees a ship of war in the offing, and is repeating her number to the Admiral."

This was important information.

"I'll gallop," he added, "down to the Admiralty House, and bring you word in ten minutes what ship it is."

Never did minutes travel more slowly than did those ten minutes at the Mount.

CHAPTER XI.

“ HERE he comes,” exclaimed Emma, who fully participated in the general anxiety ; “ look, Norah, he is waving his cap.”

“ All is right,” shouted the warm-hearted O’Gorman, as he pulled up his panting horse beneath the open window. “ It is the Petrel’s number ; she is in the offing ; but we shall not see her till to-morrow.”

Great was the joy of the family at the Mount. Captain Timmins came to bring the news ; and promised to come up to breakfast

on the following morning, to work the telescope. He thought from the state of the weather, that there would be little chance of her coming in sight, till late in the morning. Joy and sorrow, like extreme heat, and extreme cold, produce sensations which the imperfection of language compels us to express by the self-same words. Poor Norah had passed a sleepless, restless night. She was feverish, yet not unwell; still less was she unhappy.

A Negro, who had never seen ice, till he was assisting to land a cargo of it at Jamaica, having laid his hand upon a block of it, screamed with pain.

“What, in Mumbo Jumbo’s name, ails the fool?” roared the impatient driver.

“Hi, massa,” replied Sambo, shaking his hand as if in severe pain, “him burn, massa, him burn, Sambo.”

And Sambo was right: that which he felt

was precisely the same sensation which he would have experienced if he had touched a mass of hot iron ; the cause of the pain was exactly the reverse of touching hot metal, but the sensation produced was absolutely identical with it.

The telescope was visited at daylight, but there was no ship to be seen in the offing. Breakfast time came and went, but nothing was seen. Captain Timmins was at his post, pelted with questions as to the cause, and probable duration of the period of suspense, which questions he answered as well as he could. A servant entered with a note : it was from Chartres and ran thus :—

“ MY DEAR MRS. DARCIE,

“ I congratulate you, and my friends at the Mount, on the arrival of the Petrel. I have apartments prepared for Captain Dauntou,

and our friend Herbert, and rejoice in the thought of seeing them before I go.

“Your’s faithfully,

“EDWIN CHARTRES.”

At length she made her appearance, that little Petrel, so prominent in our tale, open of Green Point, emerging slowly into full view. That long expected Petrel, so ardently wished for, was before them!

“There is no mistaking her now,” said Timmins exultingly; for he was completely carried away by the irrepressible delight of those around him.

Emma danced for joy ; Norah shed a silent tear, and Mrs. Darcie, seated in her chair, covered her face with her hands, whilst in all probability, all the leading points of the important events connected with the Petrel, passed through her mind. Here, then, was the

close of that eventful drama. Daunton, Herbert, names for ever sacred in her estimation, and her own dear Darby too, would now be her guests and companions. No dangers to affright her—no painful apprehensions to disturb the natural serenity of her sensitive and generous mind. Soothed by these peaceful and pleasing thoughts, she raised her eyes to her darling to draw fresh supplies of happiness, from the contemplation of her sweet countenance, now radiant with joy. It was, indeed, to both mother and daughter, a moment of exquisite pleasure. Norah took her mother's offered hand and kissed it fondly.

Alas, how frail, how fleeting are the purest of earthly joys! At this very moment, their's were to be dashed with renewed sorrow.

Captain Timmins was still seated at the telescope, watching every movement of the Petrel, as a seamen loves to do, when a fa-

avourite ship is before him : suddenly he started from his seat.

“ By Heaven, it is so !” he exclaimed ; “ I hoped I might have been mistaken, but it is clearly the case ; how dreadful !”

Mrs. Darcie and Norah rose in an indescribable state of alarm, fearing they knew not what.

“ Speak,” said Mrs. Darcie, gasping for breath.

“ Her ensign and pennant are half-mast high,” said the kind-hearted Captain falteringly, as if he thought this would be a sufficient explanation. “ Poor Captain Daunton is dead,” he added.

“ Dead !” repeated Mrs. Darcie ! “ Captain Daunton dead ! are you sure it must be so ?”

“ Too sure ; colours half-mast high always announce a Commander’s death ;” and the tears flowed down his manly weatherbeaten face.

“Dead!” said a hollow sepulchral voice ;
“dead!” it repeated with a painful effort.
“Who’s dead?—who talks of death?”

“My poor dear child,” said the terrified mother, as she clasped her heartstricken darling in her arms, and led her to a couch.
“He is well, it is not him that is dead ; but it is our dear and excellent friend, Captain Daunton. Deeply my love shall you and I grieve for poor Daunton. And *he* will grieve with us, and will tell us how it came to be so.”

Norah had clearly comprehended this. He and him were terms which, in their confidential conversations, had ever designated one person only ; and the stress now laid upon these magic words, by the affectionate mother, had been beams of light to her tottering reason.

She raised her head, and fixing a glance of unutterable love and confidence upon the face so dear to her, faltered forth—

“You would not deceive me.”—And tears came to her relief.

Captain Timmins once more seated before the telescope, and of course with his back towards his friends, had seen nothing, and heard but little of this distressing scene: the sudden announcement of the loss of poor Daunton occupied his thoughts.

As the day advanced, a moderate south-east wind arose, blowing down the bay, and consequently opposing the Petrel's progress. The Table Mountain, stretching half-way across the head of the bay, has the effect of becalming the anchorage when the south-easter is light and steady, and indeed all that half of the bay, on the side of which Cape Town is built, whilst there is a fine breeze on the opposite side of the bay. The rippled water on the one side, and the smooth glassy surface on the other meet in the centre, and leave a distinct line down the middle of the basin. The ship having now crossed the calmer division, by the aid of flurries and cats'-paws, and got into the breeze on the other side, was

working up for the anchorage, and fast approaching it.

Chartres, who had been exceedingly shocked by the sight of her colours half-mast high, which, as he well knew, announced the loss of one he so highly esteemed, was justly apprehensive, that whatever might have proved fatal to Daunton, would most probably have proved so to many others. He hastened to the Admiral, and was permitted to go off in the guard boat, having ordered his carriage to be held ready at the wharf, as soon as a boat should be seen returning to the shore.

They just got alongside as the ship was on the point of anchoring. The wind was light; and the voice of the officer carrying on the duty was certainly not Herbert's. This was alarming. No Herbert came forward to meet him as he entered the quarter-deck; but Anstey, who had now recognised him, came up, and explained to him that Herbert was so ill, as to be confined to his bed in the cabin, whi-

ther he was forthwith conducted ; and Chartres started at beholding his young friend, reduced to a pale and feeble skeleton.

Danvers now joined them, and under his judicious management, his patient, who was in a most precarious state, was gradually made acquainted with such circumstances, as were best calculated to relieve his anxieties and to raise his spirits.

“The Darcies are all here, and well,” whispered his medical friend ; “the General is on the Staff here.”

Danvers then took Sir Edwin aside, leaving the invalid to rejoice quietly in the removal of his first and greatest source of inquietude.

Chartres and the Doctor had much to tell each other, and the latter, after a time, once more approached his patient, whose countenance had brightened perceptibly.

“You and I,” he said, “will land, and take up our quarters with Chartres, where the Dar-

cies and Mrs. Vaughan will see you. They are all very anxious to see you."

"Chouchow," continued the Doctor, "get everything ready for your master. He will land and will live in Mr. Chartres' house."

Chouchow was now butler, valet, and head nurse, all of which duties he performed admirably; though he sometimes felt annoyed at having so little to do; but his strong attachment to Herbert, and to Darby, who never left his friend, when it was possible to avoid it, gradually reconciled him to what he considered a very idle life.

Herbert thus skilfully treated, with small but powerful doses of mind-soothing cordials, felt much revived.

He pressed Chartres' hand. "Poor Daunt!" he said, in a feeble broken voice.

"Rest and compose yourself for half an hour, Herbert," said the Doctor, "Mr. Chartres will wait for us."

They were withdrawing from the cabin,

when the patient raised his hand, and beckoned to Danvers, who returned, and stooping down, placed his ear close to his patient's lips. He dreaded exertion for him.

"Our—poor—fellows are going on shore, too?" he said.

"Some of them are already gone," replied Danvers; "all that require it, will be there to-day."

In the mean time, Mr. Anstey had despatched Darby in the guard-boat, with all the usual reports, including Herbert's official account of the death of Captain Daunton, and the destruction of the pirate brigantine. It was added, that he would himself wait upon the Admiral immediately.

Darby found the Admiral waiting impatiently for him, and having answered all his questions creditably, the old Chief turned to the official papers.

"There's O'Gorman waiting for you, I see, he said; "and they'll be dying with anxiety

to see you at the Mount; so be off; you don't appear to have suffered much. Tell the General, I hope we shall soon see Captain Herbert;" and the Admiral laid particular emphasis on the word "Captain:" "but, no doubt, Chartres has now taken full possession of him. There, off with you."

Darby's warm heart beat high, his countenance flashed with delight, he seized the Admiral's hand and pressed it warmly. Had he not made Herbert a Captain?

The kind old man smiled at the boy's enthusiasm.

"You are a warm-hearted fellow," he said; "and I hope to promote you some day. But now be off."

Darby and his cousin were not long galloping to the Mount, where some minutes elapsed before anything like question and answer could possibly take place.

"And Herbert," at length whispered Mrs. Darcie, as she held her brave boy in her arms;

“and Herbert,” she repeated, deeply sympathising with poor Norah’s impatience.

“Captain Herbert, my dear mother, is ill, very ill, but more from anxiety, than from any other cause. I could not help thinking that he began to revive from the moment Danvers told him that you were still here.”

No word of Darby’s reply was lost upon Norah ; and the latter part of it, soothed in some degree the pain inflicted by the former.

“You call your friend Captain Herbert,” said the General, “how so, Darby?”

“I have the Admiral’s authority for it,” replied the boy, and he then repeated the Admiral’s message to his father. “The Captain,” he said, “will be on shore in half an hour, and Mr. Chartres’s carriage is waiting for him ; Mr. Chartres is with him.”

“You must learn to call him Sir Edwin now, my boy,” said his father, tapping him affectionately on the shoulder. “We have much to tell you, and still more to hear from

you ; above all, Darby, tell us of poor Captain Dauntou.

Norah had meanwhile been holding a whispering conference with Mrs. Darcie.

“Do you not think, my dear boy, that the motion of the carriage over the rough roads may be injurious to our friend? Had I not better send down a sedan for him?”

This measure was decided upon; and when the invalid reached the wharf, attended by Chartres and Danvers, the chair was there ready to Danvers' great relief; and he was soon conveyed to his friend's house, much less exhausted than had been apprehended. In fact, Darby's observation had been correct; to learn that the Darcies were still here, had removed a load of anxiety from his mind, at a moment, when to have endured two days' longer of suspense, might have brought on a fatal crisis in his fever.

The scale was now turned; his mind too was set at ease about his sick and wounded men,

which had scarcely been a secondary cause of disquietude to him.

Darby arrived with news from the Mount ; but Danvers allowed no communications with his patient, except in his own presence, and undertook himself to announce the joyful intelligence of his promotion, which was now generally known to have taken place.

It was cautiously imparted, and received by Herbert with heartfelt joy. He felt that it was a great point gained in contending with the obstacles to his union with Norah.

Danvers, after administering a composing draught, left his patient to the care of the assiduous and devoted Chou ; and having visited his men in the hospital, where they were in kind and skilful hands, hastened to the Mount, where he had been anxiously expected, and was most warmly received. The General had gone down to Sir Edwin's house, not expecting to be permitted to see Herbert, but to offer his congratulations, upon the arrival and

promotion of one in whom he was now so deeply interested. As early as was possible, Chouchow informed him that the "Captain" was sleeping, and that he was evidently better within the last few hours.

Danvers' account of his patient was full of hope. His mind, he said, always so susceptible, had fortunately been relieved from overwhelming cares, at a most critical moment. The effect had been most favourable; but the greatest caution was still necessary. The sedan having been sent down to the wharf, he said, was a most fortunate circumstance, for his getting into, and out of the carriage, with the jolting over a rough road, must have been most painful and fatiguing in his exhausted state, and might have brought on an access of fever.

Norah, who sat with her eyes fixed upon Danvers, the kind friend upon whom so much depended, and devouring every word he uttered, rose and walked to the window; but

though she looked forth, saw not an object in the court before the house. She did not even perceive Mrs. Vaughan's carriage, as it drove up before her face ; her eyes were filled with tears—tears of joy. Had she not also contributed her little aid to alleviate the sufferings, and to modify the danger of Herbert ?

The voice of Emma in the room, who flew with open arms to Danvers, and began loudly to pour in a torrent of questions about Herbert, aroused her fair sister, and she advanced to welcome Mrs. Vaughan, who, with her usual consideration, had called for the prattling child, to keep her out of the way for a time.

“May I go and see Captain Herbert, mamma ?” the pet said.

“Our friend is very ill, Emma, and you would be troublesome, and would disturb him,” replied mamma.

“Indeed, indeed, I won't, mamma. I was his nurse before. Ask Mr. Danvers if I ever disturbed him then. Do pray let me go ?”

Mrs. Darcie seemed half disposed to let the child go: she looked at Norah.

"I am sure Emma will be good, and will do exactly as Mr. Danvers shall direct her," said the sister, thus appealed to.

"I think," interposed Danvers, "she will be very quiet, and I am sure the sight of her will do Herbert's heart good."

Emma had flown to her sister, and embraced her fondly. She had wit enough to see that Norah's declaration in her favour had been decisive.

"Come, then," said Mrs. Vaughan, "my carriage is at the door, and shall take Mr. Danvers and Emma to Sir Edwin Chartres's, and pray, Mr. Danvers allow Mrs. Darcie and me to see our dear friend as soon as possible. I think you would find able allies in us, with your sensitive patient."

Norah, who had found it necessary to adjust some part of Emma's dress, the disorder of which no one else had seen, now returned with

her, and in a few minutes she was affectionately received by the Baronet, whilst Danvers went to see how matters stood with his patient, who, on awaking from a refreshing sleep, had found Darby by the side of his couch, to his very great satisfaction. A few words from his young friend had set his mind much at rest. The General had called, and as Darby assured him, had repeatedly expressed the strongest interest about his health ; and had been quite as much gratified at his promotion, as Mrs. Darcie herself. All this was soft music to poor Herbert, and the more so, that it was uttered in a voice, the softest and mildest tones of which brought bright visions before him.

Danvers found him calm and composed, with a pulse fast settling into a natural and healthful state.

“ You must feel,” he said, “ that you are much better. I came from the Mount, where I left the ladies, including Mrs. Vaughan, most

anxious to see you, whenever I can sanction it; but that will depend upon yourself. If you will be very quiet, and very obedient, and indulge only in agreeable anticipations, you will mend rapidly; and to encourage you, I have brought your pet Emma, who indeed would take no denial, especially when she saw that her wishes were approved by the higher powers. She pleads that she was your nurse before, and is determined to be so again. I will bring her in, but you must promise to allow Darby to take her home the instant you feel fatigued or sleepy. There must be no fatigue, no exhaustion permitted. Now, you may take of these grapes moderately, they are cooling and refreshing, better for you than swallowing sherbet.

Emma advanced on tiptoe, took Herbert's hand gently and kissed it.

"I am going to the hospital," said Danvers, "and thence on board to see my patients there. My apartment here is close to yours

I will return to you as quickly as my duty will permit; and I hope to be able on my return to make a favourable report to Captain Herbert respecting his sick and wounded."

The invalid waved him back.

"Tell the Admiral," he said, "how I long to see him, and to thank him." Then, after a pause, "Speak to him of poor Daunton: let all be done handsomely."

Herbert lay quiet for some minutes, as if fatigued by having spoken so much: then turning to his little nurse, who had remained perfectly quiet,

"All well at home, darling?" he said in a feeble voice.

"All as well as thinking of you will let them be," replied the child, who, observing that he appeared to expect she would go on, resumed willingly enough: "papa and mama talk a great deal about you, and Norah gets up into her own room and cries. She is not the merry

girl she used to be ; you can't think how she's altered."

Then after a pause, observing that Herbert seemed pleased with her prattle, she resumed : "Do you know who it was that thought of sending the sedan for you?"

Herbert smiled and shook his head.

"It was Norah," she said; "I heard mamma say so ; but Norah is not so good tempered as she used to be."

Herbert shook his head.

"Ah, you won't believe it! but she was very cross with me yesterday for nothing, and I'll tell you how it was : Norah has several nick-nacs in her room, and I own I do sometimes pull them about, or hide one of them up to tease her. She used to pretend to scold me, but I could see she was laughing. So yesterday I crept into her room, and took a shell I had often seen her take up and admire, and was running off with it, when I met her in the doorway ; and as soon as she saw the shell in

my hand, she became downright, really angry, and all about a trumpery shell. That was not right, was it, now?"

To Emma's great surprise, Herbert seemed to think that it was quite right, and to be pleased at it, though he said nothing.

"Well!" resumed the pet, responding to Herbert's look, "perhaps Norah was right—at any rate I ought not to find fault with her; for if she had not interfered for me, I should not have got leave to come and see you. I love her for that, and she desired me to tell you to get well as fast as you can, that she may come and see you too."

We doubt whether anything could have been devised so calculated to gratify Herbert as this artless prattle of Emma.

"Say to her, dear, that I am much better already, and will strive hard to get well, that I may see her; but beseech her to let you come here very, very often."

Chouchow now hinted to Darby that his

disclosed to him, trivial as they might seem to others, had a most salutary effect on his spirits. That night his dreams were pleasant, though running mainly on sedan chairs and harp shells.

CHAPTER XII.

SIR EDWIN CHARTRES, distressed to find that Herbert was still unequal to discussing with him the arrangements he wished to make, now that the Sercy was ready for sea, informed Danvers that the house, which was still his for the next two months, should be transferred to his invalid friend for that term, with such of the Cape servants as Danvers would select.

“I have two other commissions for you, Mr. Danvers,” he added: “first, to express my regret at being compelled to leave our friend so abruptly, and before poor Dauntton’s

funeral; but on my arrival in England I will atone for this last, by sending out an appropriate monument to be erected to the memory of our honoured friend. My second request is, that you will take charge of a small packet, and deliver it to Mrs. Darcie, with my kindest regards, soon after the Sercy shall be entirely clear of the port. We sail to-morrow afternoon, and I beg you will breakfast with me in the morning. We shall be alone, and I have much to say to you, both on Herbert's account and your own."

Danvers, on that evening, held a conference with Mrs. Vaughan, which resulted in a resolution to remove the invalid to her house on the morrow, which he undertook to do in a chair, the advantages of nursing Herbert in a well-ordered family house being so great, and those derived from the free access of the family at the Mount still greater. Danvers's announcement of this arrangement was received by the Darcies with great satisfaction.

The General and Major Singleton called to take leave of Sir Edwin, and to inquire for Herbert.

“We are sorry,” he said, “to part with you, Sir Edwin, but could not hope to detain you here. I bring you all sorts of good wishes from the ladies for your voyage. It’s your turn to have a safe and pleasant passage this time.”

“I could have made up my mind to have stayed longer at the Cape,” said the Baronet, with a sort of grave sad smile; “but the Fates were not propitious. Major Singleton,” he continued, “you wander through the world unscathed, and so did I, till it was too late. Beware of that error, for it admits of no remedy.”

The Major felt a little confused; but he bowed, and smiled, and looked as unconscious as he could. Sir Edwin then launched out in praise of Herbert, and lamented the necessity of leaving him, whilst he was so ill. The

subject was evidently more agreeable to the General than to Singleton, but Chartres's horses having been announced as his visitors were leaving him, he started with them for a last ride, intending to make some calls in his way home.

Herbert was carefully removed in the cool of the following morning, and appeared to be extremely pleased with his new residence, the advantages of which he could perfectly appreciate. He had become very anxious to communicate to Mrs. Darcie both the contents of poor Daunton's will, and the nature of his last conversation with his lamented chief. He was to see her to-morrow.

Danvers had held a very interesting colloquy with the Baronet at breakfast, respecting Herbert and his prospects, and had received strong assurances of friendship to himself, when Captain Timmins was announced.

"I am afraid, Sir Edwin," he said, "I must

ask you to embark at once. Table Mountain is heavily capped, and though the wind is yet moderate, there is every appearance of an unusually heavy south-easter. This is a fair wind for us, and if we do not go off at once, we may not be able to get on board the ship at all. And I dare not lose a fair wind."

The Baronet was not perhaps sorry, as all was ready, that he was thus compelled to make the move at once. He charged Danvers with kind messages for Herbert, and to his friends at the Mount, shook his hand warmly, and invited him to Brankstone Park.

"Tell our dear friends at the Mount how much I feel the impossibility of seeing them," he added.

Within an hour the Sercy was before the wind, running out of the bay, and well it was that Chartres had wasted no time, for it was soon blowing one of those furious south-easters which are fortunately of rare occurrence, and

generally of short duration, for whilst they last they cut off all intercourse with the ships in the bay, every living creature pants and crouches under their baneful influence: the air is dust; the light is glare, blue, hazy, and dazzling; vegetation shrivels; the strong man feels his energies subdued, and the invalid is stricken down by it.

“Poor Herbert,” said Danvers to Mrs. Darcie, “will not be able to see you to-day. I must go to him immediately. But I ought to tell you, first, that Sir Edwin Chartres was much distressed at being hurried off at a moment’s notice, without the possibility of taking leave of his friends.”

The noxious gale was most severe at the Mount, and all were languid and dispirited. Norah felt as if some terrible misfortune threatened her.

“Captain Daunton is dead,” she said to herself. “He felt assured we should not meet again, and his gloomy forebodings have been

realized]: day after day something occurs to prevent our seeing Herbert, and I begin to have my forebodings too."

"The fever runs high, Mrs. Vaughan," said Danvers, returning to her from his patient's room, "and I confess that I am uneasy about him ; but since we arrived here, his mind has been comparatively at ease. His removal to your house this morning evidently gave him much pleasure, so that I hope it is only the effect of this horrid wind, acting upon his reduced and extremely susceptible frame ; but I should wish to call in your friend Dr. Smail. He is so much experienced in the effects of these local evils."

The General heard that Dr. Smail had been sent for, and, after some hesitation, informed Mrs. Darcie of this alarming fact, fearing that, should she hear it suddenly, her feelings might betray her into some manifestation of alarm, which would, he knew, quickly communicate itself to Norah.

Dr. Smail remained for some hours in the house. Herbert's pulse was reduced, but his mind still wandered. At length, towards evening, the gale broke, and the patient began to breathe more freely, while the remedies applied began once more to produce the required effect.

The carriage was instantly ordered, and with all possible speed Mrs. Vaughan was at the Mount.

Norah flew to meet her: one glance at her face brought consolation to her heart, and she threw herself into Mrs. Vaughan's arms, and wept convulsively. She had by some means learned that Dr. Smail had been hastily summoned to Mrs. Vaughan's house, and had been waiting tidings, with the most painful anxiety.

There was now so much reason to believe that this alarming relapse had been induced solely by the oppressive state of the atmosphere, that all was comparatively cheer-

ful at the Mount. Herbert's anxious wish, previously expressed, to make an important communication to Mrs. Darcie, was soon after mentioned to her by Danvers, who hoped that a good night's rest, of which there was now every prospect, would enable the invalid to relieve his mind upon that point on the morrow, a desire which, as it seemed, lay oppressively upon him.

The Admiral had made every arrangement for Dauntton's funeral, which was to take place on the following day. The heads of departments, and most of the British residents, as well as many of the Dutch, were prepared to attend. General Darcie, as Herbert was incapable of being present, took upon himself the office of chief mourner, from respect for the man, and a generous sense of the services he had rendered to his family.

Danvers, on the morning after the funeral, presented the packet with which he had been entrusted by Chartres, to Mrs. Darcie: he

added, that Sir Edwin had left two beautiful horses for Herbert ; and O'Gorman coming in at the moment, cheerfully undertook the charge of them.

As there was something serious about the manner in which Chartres's packet had been sent to her, for it was not to be delivered until he should be clear of the port, Mrs. Darcie put it aside till the General should return home, and proceeded to Mrs. Vaughan's house, where it being clear that the proposed conference was an object of painful anxiety to the invalid, the two ladies visited him. He looked sharply at the door as they entered, but it was rather with hope than with expectation.

Mrs. Vaughan laid her finger upon her lip.

"I command here," she said, "and my patient must speak as little as possible."

Herbert nodded assent, and pressed Mrs. Darcie's hand to his lips, with affectionate respect.

"Our dear friend Captain Daunton," he said

“made me his heir, Mrs. Darcie, but it was only in trust for Norah, whom he had adopted as his daughter. Here is his will. The subsequent explanation was verbal, but it is equally valid.”

Mrs. Darcie read over the short, and simple bequest.

“The will,” she said, “is conclusive ; and as to Norah’s interest in it, neither the General nor I can ever consent to deprive you of that which Captain Daunton so generously, and judiciously bequeathed to you.”

Herbert beckoned to Mrs. Vaughan, who had withdrawn to the window.

“My dear, dear friend, plead for me,” he whispered: “there is only one circumstance that could possibly give value to this money in my sight.”

Mrs. Darcie smiled.

“My dear Captain Herbert,” she said, “I will not conceal from you what has occurred. We all owe you much, very much, and hold you in

the highest esteem. I speak for the General, as well as myself. I told you to wait for favourable circumstances, and fortune has favoured us. I may venture to assure you, that whenever you find yourself master of a suitable income, the General will receive your proposals with as much pleasure as I shall. And now compose yourself. I have said more perhaps than I ought to have said, but I would remove every ground of apprehension, that you might, with a mind at ease, gain health and strength. When you can receive visitors in the drawing-room, you have friends who will not fail to come."

"Oh, how ardently I long for that hour!" exclaimed Herbert.

"Be reasonable and good," said Mrs. Vaughan, laughing, "and if I can make a favourable report of you in the morning, at least Emma shall come and see you."

Mrs. Darcie repeated to her husband in the evening, what Herbert had said with respect

to Daunton's will, and his last conversation with him before his death.

"It is really a very strange series of occurrences which has brought this young fellow amongst us," observed the General, "and made him one of us, whether we will or no. Here's Darby raving about him, with that smooth tongue of his. Norah is still more eloquent in her own peculiar way, though she says nothing ; and you, Anna, I suspect, are also a strong convert to Herbertism."

"If you, Charles, had seen half as much of him as I have, you would be a convert too," she said smiling.

"And now," resumed the General, "this paragon of yours undertakes to persuade you, that the ten thousand pounds, left to him by poor old Daunton, were really intended for Norah : what next, Anna ?"

"Herbert would never condescend to speak an untruth : not you yourself, Charles, would disdain it more. The conversation with his

dying friend is true to the letter : the noble old man loved them both, and left his money, thus, to secure their union."

"Well, Anna, you know you always have your own way with me, though I will do you the justice to say, that your way is generally that which you think I shall like best; so if this foolish boy has but wherewithal to secure a moderate provision for a wife and family, I confess that I should prefer him to any other foolish boy of my acquaintance, and if I cannot have my own princely Chartres for a son-in-law, I must e'en accept of Herbert,—Captain Herbert now, and his promotion gallantly earned too; I like him all the better for that: so go and indulge yourself in five minutes' chat with our dear anxious girl. Tell her that you and I are fully agreed upon this point, but that she shall have the full power of a *veto* in the matter, should she change her mind, and then return to me, that we may inspect this ominous-looking packet from our gallant

Baronet: he is a noble fellow, is Chartres. I shall miss him much."

The interview that followed between Norah and her mother, we will not pretend to describe. It was one of those intensely happy scenes, which only the most pure-minded, affectionate, and generous of women can ever hope to enjoy, and of which the sour, the selfish, and heartless of the sex can form no adequate conception. The General well knew that the mother and daughter would have no very accurate notion of the lapse of time, under existing circumstances; and might indeed deem hours to be minutes. Finding therefore, that O'Gorman was in the house, he sent for him, and received and discussed certain reports, giving him some instructions for the next day.

"Now, Charles," he said, "I knew I had something to say to you. It appears to me that you have taken a great fancy to Darby's pert, conceited friend, Mr. Tandy. He's prone

enough to mischief, without your urging him, and as the youngster is coming to stay here for a few days, I hope you will rather check than encourage him."

"That boy, sir, to quote a distinguished author, 'will be the death of me,' " returned O'Gorman; "but his cool assurance, I own, is extraordinary, and has carried him safely through many adventures. I will lead him into no mischief, but, if it were consistent with your dignity to listen to a dialogue between Tandy and me, over a cigar, in the tent, and at the same time, to observe the attitude of the imp, you would die with laughter. After all, I like the boy, and he is devotedly attached to Darby: I will keep him out of mischief, depend upon it."

"Do, Charles," said the General. "But to return to your official character as my master of horse; what means the addition of two saddle horses, yesterday? I have no rations for extra horses."

“I beg your pardon,” replied O’Gorman, “but I forgot to mention to you, that Mr. Danvers consulted me yesterday about two horses which Sir Edwin Chartres had left as a parting present to Captain Herbert. I took charge of them, lest they should be neglected, and on going to look at them, I found one of them was that noble bright bay, which was so great a favourite with Sir Edwin. And the other, to my great astonishment, was nothing less than Madame Kleinevogel’s celebrated Lillywhite, the best ladies’ horse in the colony. I know she has more than once refused a thousand dollars for the horse, and no doubt the Baronet paid a long price for it; and it was clearly bought, on the very eve of his departure, for the especial purpose of presenting it to a young bachelor. Is not that very odd, sir?” he added, with mock gravity.

“It is only one amongst a variety of odd things, that have happened lately to the young bachelor in question,” said the General, laughing.

Seeing Mrs. Darcie enter the General's room, with the mysterious packet of which he had heard, O'Gorman retired.

The packet was found to contain a parchment, with the following explanatory note, or rather memorandum.

"I need not tell you, my dear friend, of my sincere regard for every member of your family. We have shared some perils, and some pleasures together ; and, if it is not presumptuous to say so, are tried friends. And so highly do I esteem Captain Herbert, who is, I hope and trust, the accepted lover of Miss Darcie, that I think him worthy of this good fortune.

"Our excellent friend, Captain Daunton, who saw them so much together, bequeathed all his property to Herbert, no doubt in the hope that it would facilitate an union, upon which, in his sincere regard for both of them, but more especially for Miss Darcie, he had set his heart. A moderate portion of property is necessary to domestic happiness ; and I trust

I may be permitted to present Miss Darcie with the portion conveyed to her by the inclosed document. I think, my dear friend, that knowing each other as we do, this little sum, which is of no consequence to me, will be accepted, as a slight proof of my sincere wishes for the happiness of a union, which it is clear to me, the Fates have ordained. I must request the favour of hearing from you occasionally, and look forward to the pleasure of seeing you at Brankstone Park with great eagerness. God's blessing rest upon you and yours.

“EDWIN CHARTRES.”

“This,” said the General, after looking over the parchment, “is a deed of gift to Norah for five thousand pounds, to be invested in her name, and secured to her separate use. We are named as her trustees, until she shall marry, or attain the age of twenty-one years. Chartres is indeed a noble fellow, Anna, and

how it happened that you and the girls, in your dangers and distresses, met with such pure and chivalrous knights, I cannot imagine. I shall begin to believe that such characters are much more numerous than we are apt to think, and only await congenial circumstances to call forth all that is noble and generous."

"It was the Almighty's pleasure to try us severely, my dear Charles; and He vouchsafed to provide defenders for us, in the extremity of our danger. Those fervent prayers, uttered in our distress, and so graciously heard, have taught me an important lesson; and when my devotions become cold and languid, I have only to call to mind what my feelings were when I awoke, to find myself, and those dearer than self, apparently in the power of ferocious monsters. Oh! Charles, it was a terrible moment; and then we learnt what fervent prayer was, and how it is heard."

The General pressed her to his heart.

"No more business to-night, my love," he

said, affectionately. "We have much to be thankful for. Kiss my dear girl for me, and assure her that you do not approve her whole conduct, or sympathise in her generous attachment to Herbert, more warmly than her father does."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE communications made by Mrs. Vaughan and Danvers to Herbert, had proved powerful restoratives. He begged to be permitted to appear in the drawing-room for an hour or two, on the following morning. Darby and Emma, who paid him an early visit, conveyed this intelligence to the Mount. The General called upon him, and was most cordial in his manner. In short, it was soon rumoured that Herbert was the accepted lover of Norah Darcie. Chartres, in his chivalrous feeling, had

intimated, as we have seen, that he had been unsuccessful, and thus the coarse conclusions of Timmins's landlady and her clique, by which he had been so shocked, fell to the ground.

Herbert was soon well enough to receive the congratulations of his friends. Mrs. Vaughan would not hear of his leaving her house, where he enjoyed continually the pleasure of seeing Norah and Mrs. Darcie; and a few days more enabled him to visit the Mount.

A proud and a joyful man was Herbert, when first he sallied forth upon his own bright bay, with Norah, who was an excellent horse-woman at his side, upon Lillywhite. The spirited animal seemed proud of his fair burthen, as he bounded forward, obedient to the slightest impulse from her light and gentle hand. The General gazed with delight upon the graceful girl, urging or checking her steed at will, and was justly proud of his pupil. These were halcyon days; troubles and dangers had been firmly met: the happy pair

had been tried, and they had not been found wanting. The last three months of their lives had been chequered with joys and sorrows, such as few have known, even in a long course of years ; and now they had promises of undisturbed, and permanent happiness. Enjoying each other's society freely, and unreservedly, amidst her family and friends, they had at the moment nothing left to wish for.

The recent death of their generous friend Daunton, was an obstacle to their immediate union ; but the Petrel must proceed to England.

The General and Mrs. Darcie felt that something was due to Chartres also, though neither Herbert, nor his bride elect, were aware that he had offered his hand ; they loved and honoured him, and felt deeply grateful for his kindness.

“ I hope I shall not be spoiled,” said Norah, as she was cantering Lillywhite by Herbert's side, “ but happiness has come pouring down

upon me of late in great things and small, till I feel almost that it is too much. It is strange Herbert, but I never did wish for anything else of the kind as I have often wished for this beautiful creature." And she patted his arched neck and spoke to him, whilst he appeared to be conscious and proud of her caress and admiration.

"Lillywhite seems to have been made on purpose for you," replied Herbert, "and I believe he thinks so himself. I assure you I had some scruples about your mounting him, so much had I heard of his spirit ; but the General laughed at my apprehensions, and he was right: no other person is worthy to ride him."

"I have often seen Madame Kleinevogel, who is an excellent horsewoman, managing him with difficulty,"—and she once more patted and spoke to the horse,—“but she was rough with him, and I thought if I had him, I would rule him by gentle means ; always the surest plan, with a high and generous spirit, and we

understand each other, don't we, my Lilly-white?"

"And now," said Herbert, "I have something to show to you here, my dear Norah, deeply interesting to us both—ay, and to you, too, Darby."

He turned off the road, and walked his horse towards Daunton's grave. Having assisted Norah to alight, and sent the servants with the horses to a neighbouring farm-house, he placed her arm within his.

"Let us walk together to the tomb of our best, our dearest friend, Norah. When I think what a world of happiness I owe to poor Daunton, his memory is more dear to me than that of a parent. It is to his love for you, and his conviction that your happiness would be the great object of my life, that I owe his munificent bequest. His kind heart foresaw that giving me a moderate independence, would enable me to hope for your hand, and yet, Norah, it is painful to reflect, that it is to the untimely

death of our valued friend, that I owe the promotion and the fortune, without which it would have been madness to aspire to such happiness as I now possess. My gratitude to Daunton shall only cease with my life."

Norah was deeply affected. Well did she remember all Daunton's kindness, and, above all, his strange conviction, so painfully felt and so positively announced, that they would never meet again.

"Alas, Herbert!" she said, "his sad forebodings have proved but too true. May Heaven's blessing rest upon him, who has so largely blessed us."

One of the first efforts of Herbert's convalescence, had been to visit the Hospital with Danvers, where his sick and wounded men, now all rapidly recovering, received their young Captain with great joy. He had bled with them, had suffered with them, and he was a true disciple of the mild and considerate Daunton, who, though a strict disciplinarian,

had ever ruled them gently though firmly, and with so much justice, that the propriety of his decisions were never questioned.

Herbert, after this, had continued to visit the Hospital daily.

Amongst the minor difficulties of Mrs. Darcie, in arranging her daughter's household stood the strange heathenish appellation of Herbert's invaluable steward and butler.

"But, my dear Mrs. Vaughan," said the perplexed matron, "who ever heard of a butler called Chouchow?"

"It will be very easy to find a better name for him," replied her friend.

"By no means," said Mrs. Darcie, "for though I believe the honest fellow would lay down his life for Herbert, or for Darby, he clings to his horrid name pertinaciously."

Darby tried his influence, but in vain; Herbert could not interfere, as he would not risk a failure.

"Well, Norah," said Darby, "there is but one

chance of success ; and here he comes up the avenue. I think you might succeed. You must ask it as a favour to yourself."

Darby sallied forth with Norah upon his arm: Chouchow hastened to meet them, and delivered a note to Norah.

"Well, Chou," said Darby, "how is the Captain this morning."

"He seems uncommon well, I think, Mr. Darby, but I am to wait for an answer."

"Well, Mr. Chou," said Norah, "I know all the care you used to take of my brother, and I am very glad you have attached yourself to the Captain. You are a great favourite with him."

Chou chuckled and coloured, and was evidently much pleased by being thus addressed.

"I hope, ma'am," said Chou, respectfully, "that I shall be able to please you. I don't care how much I have to do, if I can but please, ma'am."

"As you really wish to please me," said the

lady, "I will ask a favour of you, and I think you won't refuse me."

"That I wont, ma'am," he replied, "if it is what I can do."

"You can easily do it, Mr. Chou, for it is only to change your name to one that will sound better in a lady's ear."

"Oh! ma'am," said Chou, drawing back ; "pray don't ask me to do that. Nobody don't like to part with their name ; you wouldn't like it yourself, ma'am."

"Why," replied Norah, smiling archly, whilst the colour rose in her cheeks; "surely I may ask this of you, for as I am going to change my name to please your master, you will, I hope, change your's to please me."

"Well, ma'am," said Chou, "I haven't another word to say. You may give me any name you please."

"You will please both the Captain and me much," said Norah ; "and I think you won't

dislike your new name : but I will step in and answer this note."

"Mr. Darby," said Chou, "I couldn't tell Miss, that I had never been christened. I never used to hear of such things when I was a boy, for I was always in small craft like ; and I never had father or mother to care for me."

"Is it possible, my poor Chou, that you can have been so neglected. Why I have seen you attentive at prayers."

"I could see the difference between those who were religious and other people," said Chou, "and I have tried to be like them, but who was to teach or to care for Chouchow."

"Doctor Mason will instruct and examine you, Chou, and I think you can be christened, when the Captain is married."

"I should like that," said Chou; "but do you know, Mr. Darby, what name it is, that Miss wishes me to have."

"She wishes you to like your new name, so

what do you think of Chowton—Mr. Chowton.”

The poor fellow was in ecstasies.

“Chowton,” he said, “then I shall be Chou still. I know, Mr. Darby, you’ll call me Chou-chow sometimes, won’t you?”

“That I will, and so will the Captain, I know, and somebody else too, Chou, for you are a great favourite.”

The return of Norah from the house with a note, cut short the conference, and sent Mr. Chowton off the happiest of men, notwithstanding his dislike to new names.

While this was passing, O’Gorman was busy with Tandy,

“What say you to a cigar in the tent, Tandy?” he said, “its cool and shady there; and here comes Tom Strangeways just in time.”

This arrival was a preconcerted accident, for like his friend O’Gorman, Tom enjoyed Mr. Tandy’s society and conversation exceedingly.

“What have you done with Darby?” said O’Gorman, as soon as they were seated.

“Darby,” replied his friend, “is riding with the Captain and the ladies. He expects to mount me to-morrow.”

“I suppose you are a good horseman?”

“I should think so,” replied the boy, rather superciliously.

“Darby is in luck,” said O’Gorman; “for now that his sister rides that splendid Lilly-white, looking like an angel on horseback, as the sleek, pampered, prancing milk-white beauty, with his large soft eye and arched neck—.”

“Halloo,” interrupted Strangeways; “you getting poetical, too! why that girl turns all heads but mine. I’m the most sensible man in the garrison, Tandy.”

“Well! well!” said O’Gorman laughing, “I’m afraid if that is the case, the garrison is on short allowance of good sense, Tom, which is likely enough. I was only going to say, that I should have offered Tandy my Dubskelper at

once, only he starts and bolts, and runs away, and I thought our friend having always been at sea, could hardly be equal to riding him."

"I beg your pardon," said Tandy, glad of an excuse to lay down his cigar. "I'm not afraid of any horse, especially when I know his faults."

"Dubskelper," observed Strangeways, "is a regular varmint."

"He has his faults like other people, Tom," said O'Gorman, "but he neither kicks, bites, nor stumbles; and as I am generally in a hurry, his running away is rather an advantage, for I have only to keep his head in the right direction and I get over the ground gloriously. Tandy knows his faults now, and can do as he likes."

"I shall be too happy to accept your offer," replied Tandy.

"I intended to have followed the party, and my horse will be here directly," said O'Gorman: "but a message from the General re-

quires me to remain here, so take him if you like."

"Confound Dubskeeper," exclaimed Strangeways, "why can't we enjoy a cigar and a social chat, and as Tandy calls his late adventures a mere nothing, I want to hear some of his red hot doings in the West Indies ; no lions there, I believe."

"Pardon me, Strangeways," said the youngster familiarly (he would fain have called him Tom, as O'Gorman did, but the pear was not quite ripe). "Pardon me, my dear fellow, I don't exactly say that all this affair has been mere nothing. On the contrary, I admit that we have had what may properly enough be called a stirring three months, ra—a—ther so. But here's the horse."

Dubskeeper allowed the boy to mount him, feeling satisfied as to his weight ; and off they set, apparently upon very good terms with each other ; and Tandy evidently on excellent terms with himself.

“I don’t like our friend’s seat, Tom,” said O’Gorman, ‘looking after them.’

“Why, what did you expect? I doubt if he has ever been on the outside of a horse before,” said his friend. “But you never can let well alone ; here we had got him in full swing for a West Indian budget, which promised to be both rich and rare, and then his bye play is so good. I wanted to catch the spirit of it, and your blundering head has spoiled the fun. And what’s more, you may thank your stars if Mr. Tandy with Dubskelper’s help, does not break his own neck or somebody’s else.”

Tandy meantime had gained the road, and being anxious to overtake the Darcie party, began to urge Dubskelper forward by dint of whip, for O’Gorman had prudently refused him spurs, under the pretext that his horse would never stand them.

Dubskelper shook his head and laid down his ears ominously, but declined to mend his pace ; and as he and his rider were equally

self-willed and hasty, the difference of opinion soon became a serious quarrel.

“You won’t, won’t you,” quoth the rider, “then I must make you, that’s all.”

And suiting the action to the word, he took Dubskeeper a cut on the flank, which irritated him highly, but still it did not improve his pace; cut the second, only made matters worse. Dubskeeper began to buck and to bound, as if to satisfy his doubts as to his new rider’s horsemanship. Tandy had no idea of a seat, but he was confident and fearless, and had a knack of balancing himself, under all sorts of movements, gained by long service in small ships, which appeared very unaccountable to Dubskeeper, who had cut capers enough to have dislodged half a dozen loose unpractised riders, but Tandy stuck on like a monkey, and with perfect composure. Poor Dubskeeper’s dander was now effectually raised. He seized the bit between his teeth, and set off at a full gallop. Tandy thought this capital

fun, and began to consider himself a first rate horseman, though every person he passed turned round to stare at him.

“Confound the fools,” muttered Tandy ; “did they never see a man that could ride before.”

And he was well worth looking at : his toes were beautifully turned out, and his legs had plenty of play. It was lucky he had not been entrusted with spurs, for they would have kept up an incessant assault and battery upon Dubskelper’s flanks, and he was very far from requiring fresh excitement.

Herbert, who much as he admired Norah’s horsemanship, and the beautiful figure she made upon a steed so worthy of her, was yet always a little apprehensive lest some accident should startle Lillywhite, whose strength, compared with the gentle hand he so readily obeyed, was irresistible, soon heard the alarm.

“What’s all this,” he exclaimed, as he heard the wild clattering of hoofs behind him.

Lillywhite heard it, too, and began to show symptoms of impatience, when Tandy suddenly passed them at full speed, a complete sailor on horseback, keeping his seat in despite of the grossest violation of all rule, smiling and bowing, and looking as if he was conscious that he was "witching the world with noble horsemanship."

The General on one side of Norah, and Herbert on the other, with their horses perfectly under command, continuing the same gentle pace, gave the fretful Lillywhite the benefit of example, and after a little curvetting with ears erect, the gentle patting from Norah's soft hand, and her now well-known voice rendered the noble animal tractable.

"Confound that troublesome brat," said Herbert, as soon as he could speak, which was by no means immediately, "a mad boy on a mad horse."

"Don't be angry with poor Tandy," said Norah. "How he kept on is wonderful to me."

“Yes;” added the General. “I can’t comprehend it, and there he sat with his legs flying all ways, perfectly at his ease, and clearly thinking himself a first-rate horseman, and so he is, but quite upon a new principle. I shall take O’Gorman to task for putting him upon that brute. Darby has, I see, followed his friend at a distance. I hope there will be no broken bones.”

“Nothing can ever hurt that boy,” said Herbert, laughing; “I have no doubt that he believed himself, and persuaded O’Gorman to believe that he was a capital horseman. Poor Daunton used to be sadly annoyed by his getting into scrapes, but the boy carried himself so gallantly upon all occasions, that he never could take any severe measures with him; and I confess I used to smooth matters, for which I believe our dear old friend was thankful in his heart, though he sometimes grumbled at it.”

“I have often heard you say, Herbert,” said

a soft sweet voice near him, "that Captain Dauntton should ever be your professional model, so pray be gentle with Tandy. Both Lillywhite and I have gained credit, and there's no harm done, for here he comes quite safe."

"Well, Darby," said the General, "who stopped the runaway so soon?"

"Tandy, himself," replied the boy; "for as soon as he came to the sandy hill, a little higher up on the right of the road, he put his horse at it, and laid on with his whip till he brought the brute to a stand still."

"And how did you persuade the perverse animal to take to a deep sand, Tandy?" asked the General, who began to be very much amused.

"Why, sir," said Tandy, "as soon as I saw the sand hill, I pulled in upon the starboard rein with all my might, on the principle that if I could get his head to point the right way, his body would follow. He disputed the point at first, but soon gave way; and when I

got him half leg deep in the sand, I paid him off. He's as tame as a cat now.

"Capital, Tandy ; but I must ask you one more question. Don't be offended ; but were you ever on horseback before ?"

"O yes, sir," he replied coolly, "three or four times, but not lately."

"Frankly answered ; and, to say the truth, you kept your seat nobly. It was, in fact, the most original piece of horsemanship that ever fell under my observation, and I give you great credit."

This is the last incident of our history. From that moment all was calm and smooth. The Petrel was preparing for England, her crew was fast recovering, her relief was momentarily expected.

Herbert's temporary establishment had been arranged by Mrs. Darcie and her friend ; and a faithful old Scotch servant of the latter, who wished to return to England, became Norah's personal attendant. The recent death of

Daunton justified the privacy of the marriage, and enabled the young couple to claim the privilege of declining invitations. Mr. Chowton proved an invaluable butler ; and as his ears were occasionally tickled by his being spoken to as Chouchow, he was perfectly happy.

Emma had whilst in the Petrel shown such predilection for a Midshipman's life, that Mrs. Darcie had allowed her to pay a long promised visit to a friend in the country whilst Tandy was at the Mount.

Major Singleton did not break his heart, but was a little put out by the General's fondness for Herbert, and the warmth with which he frequently spoke of him.

"Darcie is a fine fellow," soliloquised the gallant Major, as he beheld his own martial well got-up figure in his glass ; "but they want taste, all the family of them."

Our youthful couple beheld with pleasure the little craft which had played so conspi-

cuous a part in their short but eventful history, once more in all her trim array, ready to convey them to England ; and Norah learned to feel almost as deep and heartfelt an affection as Herbert himself for THE PETREL.

THE END.



